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THE FABRIC OF EUROPE

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An Historical Survey of International Relations

by

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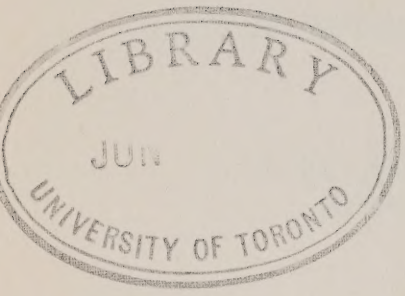

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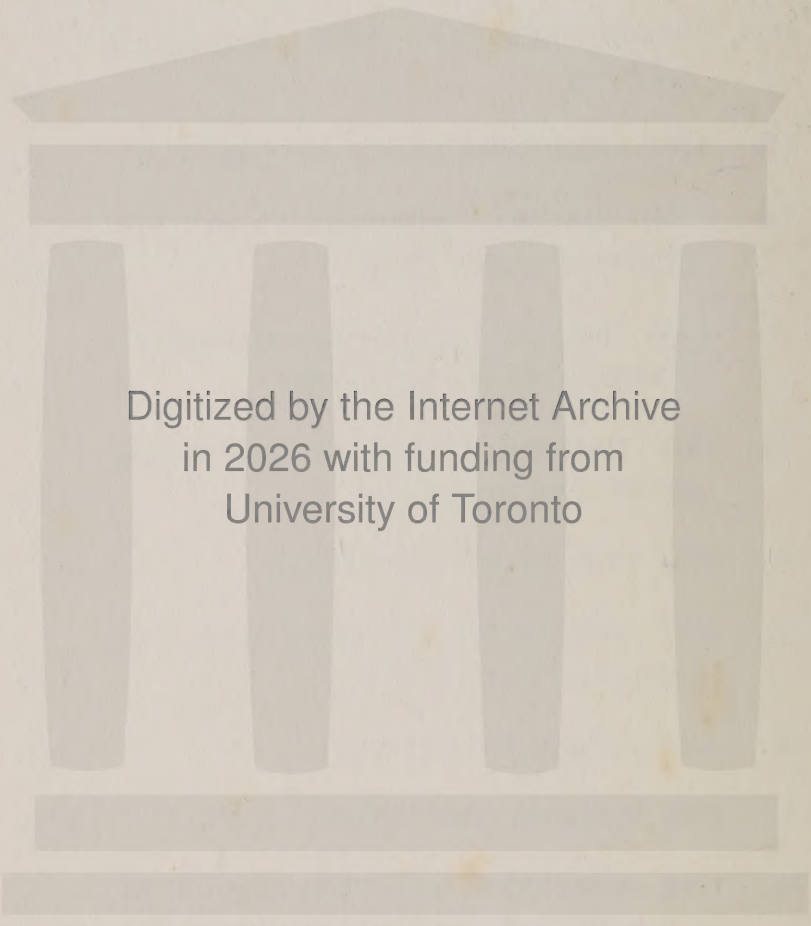
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION—MOTIVE OF THE ESSAY

THIS essay has been twice re-written. Its first draft, which was composed of purely historical matter, was planned and for the most part put together on air-raid nights as a nerve-tonic. With the guns actually at work, the thought that an air-attack on London was but an insignificant episode in a world-war did not adequately exorcise uneasiness. For the consequence to be discounted it seemed necessary that the cause should be justified as well as stated. The inquiry thus suggested itself whether the European body politic harboured diseases so obstinate and so deep-seated as to demand such drastic surgery ; and to this question which, as the war became more comprehensive and more hideous, must have occurred in some form to every reflective mind, an answer was sought so far as it could be obtained by the method of historical analysis.

In its original shape, then, the essay was no more than a discussion of the ultimate causes of war in Europe, an investigation of the permanent sources of European unrest. The omission of

references to the transatlantic extension of the war then raging was due neither to sheer Johnsonian ignorance nor to any conscious lack of youthful infallibility, but to the fact that, at this time—the winter of 1917-18—American intervention appeared, historically speaking, as an excresence on the original struggle. Our conceptions of the eventual settlement became, indeed, more and more ecumenical, but its prospects of permanence evidently rested on its success in appeasing European antipathies. An exclusive study of European conditions therefore appeared legitimate enough.

The situation was, however, transformed by the spring of 1918, when the first draft was complete. Two new circumstances had supervened, both of which raised questions of principle. The argument had originally been that Europe was organised into nations, that there existed abiding causes of conflict between these nations, and that national feeling had become more and more self-assertive until war could no longer be averted. But as the war progressed towards its climax, the cardinal doctrine of nationality was challenged from two quarters. On the one hand the Bolshevist revolution had cut Russia off from the whole Western world and was beginning to throw up a new system of political philosophy to which the idea of nationality was anathema. On

the other hand the influence of America had increased with her increasing participation in the war, and America was at this time full of enthusiasm for a League of Nations which was intended to be an authority above nations—a modern substitute for the mediæval Papacy—possessed of powers, material as well as moral, to prohibit national wars.

The argument of the essay thus threatened to become a mere useless exercise, a tissue of elaborate explanations that led nowhere. No writer who believed in his ideas and his method could have his work exposed to such damning criticism. It was at least necessary to show that if only facts be adequately docketed their moral leaps to the eye. With this object the analytical method was applied to a more abstract sphere. The rival national organisations, and still more the differences between them, were examined to show what fundamental ideas they severally embodied, and what influence these ideas were calculated to exert on the new world-system which generous minds were everywhere impulsive to construct. As thus revised, the argument reflected the strain of those terrible months after the March offensive. It sought to exhibit in bold and concentrated outline the reasons which nerved minds not naturally bellicose, minds to which the spectacle

of the havoc-stricken world was a torture, to be resolute and uncompromising. Written with great difficulty, for the agonies of the time consorted ill with the dispassionate temper of the analysis, the new argument was finished shortly before the armistice. Immediate publication was perhaps possible, but there seemed little point in submitting theories of polity when the decisions of the Peace Conference would so shortly bring them to the test of facts. A third version of the argument thus became necessary which should aim at showing how far the Peace had settled the questions which the war had raised, and the essay was, therefore, laid aside until after Paris had spoken. But the oracle was too long absorbed in the mysterious processes of its internal thought. Wearying of its silence, the peoples of the world began to adopt independent attitudes towards the issues referred to it; and in the end its laborious pronouncements, made constantly more suspect by the intervals between them, were almost everywhere controverted, ignored, or defied. All these unhappy developments sprang from the cardinal error of supposing that time stands still after a victory. The men who met together in Paris in February, 1919, were still, perhaps, masters of the world. But authority maintains itself only by its exercise; it must be for ever imposing itself on

circumstances which are for ever changing; and when the Paris conference met, twelve precious weeks had already been wasted on the preliminaries to its assembly. Tacitus, in his story of the vicissitudes after Nero's death, has a biting phrase about an Emperor offering sacrifice to the Gods on behalf of an Empire which was no longer his. With the same blind solemnity the "Big Four" deliberated over a situation which every hour was removing from their control. Discovery only came after the presentation to Turkey of a Treaty not worth the paper on which it was written, because it dealt with conditions which had passed out of existence.

So far as the Eastern question was concerned, then, the Paris settlement was clearly fictitious, and historical analysis is only of value when applied to facts. On the other hand even the Turkish Treaty was not wholly sham; there was no doubt, for example, about the collapse of Turkish rule in Mesopotamia. It thus became necessary to distinguish critically between the real and the unreal, or, if such critical distinction proved impossibly difficult, to wait for time to do its work. Nor was this necessity confined to the Near Eastern field. The treaty with Germany was, indeed, in operation, but its instability had been made patent by the circumstances of its

signature. Germany, who had not been consulted about its provisions, had refused to endorse them. Her objections were overruled, and threats had secured the formation of a government in Berlin which signed under duress. But the events of midsummer 1919 presented criticism with material on which to work. They raised two questions which thought could answer, had not time, impelled by their urgency, already replaced inferences by facts. In the first place was it justifiable to dismiss the German protests as mere humbug. Their very intensity suggested that they were sincere, and it is now apparent that Germany averted instant economic collapse by recourse to a desperate expedient. Lured by the vain hope of somehow regaining her footing in the world's markets she stimulated export by depreciating her currency. Catastrophe has followed so inevitably that it is already difficult to realise how the Reparation clauses of the Treaty of Versailles ever came to be drafted. They are, in fact, a tribute to the sense of her power which Germany succeeded in impressing on her enemies. To Britain and France, wealthy powers with a proud consciousness of their wealth, the finance of the war was a besetting difficulty. But to Germany it appeared to present no difficulty at all. Twice a year the German people were invited to subscribe

the necessary funds, and twice a year the money was forthcoming. These gigantic loans, it was argued, were the results of Germany's wonderful economic development during the previous forty years; and it was the same Germany still, with her industrial resources undamaged, and even stimulated by the war to greater productivity. And so there was imposed upon a Germany in fact defeated, disrupted, and disheartened, a burden roughly equivalent to her whole war debt at par of exchange, just such a burden as she had broken her own back by assuming in the flower of her strength, with ambition and patriotism to steel her temper.

The second question was consequent upon the first. Was there behind the Treaty, signed with such obvious reluctance the force no less obviously required to ensure steady compliance with its provisions? To this question events gave an answer at once. The hostility of American opinion to the whole Treaty was so pronounced that its rejection by the United States Senate was assured. Unhappily the moral was not drawn. Just because the Senate's vote had been foreseen, its effect on the political situation in Europe was under-estimated. The Treaty had been framed on the assumption that in peace, as during the war, the new world would be available to redress the balance

of the old. This assumption was falsified by the defection of the greatest new-world Power, and France, thus weakened in her external support, at once began to display that anxiety for her territorial security which has dominated her policy ever since. British opinion quite failed to appreciate the violence of the change in French feeling. Nothing was done to meet a situation which might perhaps have been re-established by the immediate proposal of a Franco-British alliance. Nearly three years were allowed to elapse, however, before a scheme for a pact with France was definitely propounded, and in the interval French opinion had studied the material factors of the situation. France, it concluded, was strong enough to act alone; better, therefore, that her hands should remain entirely free.

Although this hardening of the French attitude is all of a piece with French contentions at the Conference table, it was noted in Downing Street with the irritation provoked by the unexpected. Two explanations may be offered of the reluctance of British statesmanship to face the logic of circumstances. First, it may have viewed the American defection as only temporary for the reason that America required the co-operation of Europe, and would therefore herself co-operate in return. Events have shown the limitations within which

this view holds good. Taught by the war that the sea is one, the United States realised that the threatening issue of naval armaments in the Pacific could not be resolved without regard to sea-power in the old world. She was thus impelled to summon the naval Conference at Washington, whose sucess has deservedly impressed contemporary opinion. As soon as it assembled the Conference was presented with a far-reaching scheme for the reduction of naval armaments, and this scheme was eventually carried without substantial change. Of all the international gatherings which have been held since the armistice, Washington alone has realised the expectations which it aroused. That is a great gain, particularly at a time when the world is beginning to grow sceptical as to the efficacy of the time-honoured democratic method of government by frank discussion. Moreover, the Conference has exorcised the spectre of imminent war in the Pacific. Amid its many troubles the world need at least no longer dread a breach of the peace in the region where the Far West meets the Far East. Nevertheless, it is as yet by no means clear that history will regard the Washington Conference as inaugurating a new epoch in the relations between sovereign states. The limitation of armaments is confined to high-sea fleets. It does not affect the development of an air offensive except

in so far as this is controlled by the provision of carrier ships; and, in spite of British exertions, it does not affect the development of a submarine offensive at all. Nor are the territorial guarantees decisive. Before the war Germany had become a party to Baltic and North Sea agreements of a similar general character, but their signature did not affect the course of German policy. In fact, the Washington Conference has not settled the Pacific question; it has simply postponed it under such conditions that none of the interested States feel that time is working against them.[1] So far as the immediate future is concerned, therefore, the foundations of peace require more than ever to be laid in Europe, but it can no longer be hoped that a diplomatic bargain will secure American help in laying them. The co-operation has been on one side only, and, thanks partly to her own intentions and partly to the uncompromising attitude of France, America has succeeded in determining her Pacific policy without reference to old world rivalries. Fresh hopes have, however, been inspired by the reflection that, though politically free from Europe, America is still financially tied to her. It is true that the general tranquillity of Europe depends on the general settlement of

[1] This depreciatory view is evidently shared by the British Admiralty; witness its decision to build a new Rosyth at Singapore.

national indebtedness, and that such a settlement must needs involve the transatlantic creditor. But, in her resolve to avoid foreign entanglements, the United States has made a general settlement impossible. Acting, as the phrase goes, with the most perfect courtesy and in accordance with her undoubted rights, she is enforcing her claims against the debtor States as so many separate transactions; and if a scheme of cancellation all round is put forward she will not co-operate, she will only dictate. Europe, she says, must disarm or pay. But patriotic feeling finds its most vigorous outlet in preparations for national defence—a fact which explains the readiness of continental peoples to shoulder the burden of compulsory military service; and in Europe, with its grim tradition of wars of conquest, no sovereign State dare permit external judgment to determine its defensive needs. If it finds itself forced to choose between financial reputation and territorial security, it will inevitably sacrifice the former. America, with no enemy within 3000 miles of her, has failed to do justice to the strength of this European sentiment, and her attitude, though intelligible enough, has destroyed the prospect of world-co-operation in the re-establishment of the world's finances.

The alternative explanation of Britain's attitude

towards continental affairs is more creditable to British statesmanship. It was on Mr. Lloyd George's initiative that the League of Nations' Covenant was incorporated in the peace terms. This arrangement must have been more than an expedient to overcome divergencies between France and her allies, though its usefulness in this regard is illustrated by the Sarre Valley clauses of the Treaty. The proposal involved an obvious risk of scaring away neutral powers who might thus feel themselves committed to safeguarding a settlement which they had not helped to fashion; but it becomes intelligible if its author perceived that the Treaty had its defects and wished to incorporate in its structure the mechanism for repairing them. On this hypothesis the inclusion of the Covenant was calculated to have thoroughgoing effect. The terms imposed on Germany could not be regarded as final when the very document which imposed them also constituted a body whose function was to prevent wars by attacking their causes. The implication was obvious that the terms might be, and even ought to be, revised in the light of their working. It is possible that this high and delicate task would have proved within the competence of a League which included the United States, but her defection left France with a veto subject to no practical

check. The League was not backed by force; at the outset of its work it necessarily lacked prestige ; had it at once plunged into the controversies which Germany was ready to bring before its tribunal it would have expired in the emission of pious hopes. Happily the League has avoided the pitfall. By confining itself to issues on which its decisions would be accepted it has clothed itself with the beginnings of authority. But rather than court failure, it has postponed work which it was constituted to undertake, and the common sense which has led it to dally with the preliminaries to the fundamental matter of disarmament has disappointed the enthusiasm of its supporters. Nevertheless, the League knows its business. It understands how far it can go. It can trace the frontiers of Silesia, assured in advance of the material support of the victorious Great Powers; it cannot trace the frontiers of Lithuania because material support is lacking; yet even here it has shown willingness to intervene and has sought to impose its moral authority as a check on Polish ambitions. It may even be that its views would have prevailed had they not been flouted by the Council of Ambassadors which, acting under the powers conferred upon it by the Treaty of Versailles, has awarded Poland everything she chose to claim. The episode is significant of

the confusion which would follow the entry of the League upon the province of the Reparations Commission. It was indeed clear, even before French policy had entered on its uncompromising phase, that reparations must needs be left well alone, because their consideration would imperil the unanimity without which the League's decisions are invalid. In adopting its negative attitude towards this fateful issue the Council has shown its practical wisdom; at the same time, however, it has further confused the situation created by the Treaty of Versailles. Baffled in its attempts to set European affairs on a permanently stable footing, the Paris Conference contented itself with a makeshift treatment of fluctuating circumstances. It gave interim awards and established a final court of appeal. But the court is not yet ready to sit, and meantime issues gravely affecting the future of Europe has been handled in just that temper of crude, intolerant nationalism which the League was devised to bridle.

A further and more subtle difficulty lurks in the background. It is one of the commonplaces of history that ancient wars were fought over land, mediæval wars over religion, modern wars over trade. As a rough and ready key to history this dogma is of value until late in the eighteenth century. But it is no longer up-to-date. The

greatest modern wars have been fought over theories of society, though the belligerents themselves may not have been aware of the fact. The statesmen of Vienna, for example, looked back on their war as a struggle to suppress French militarism. Thus viewed, it had ended in a victory which the Peace sought to safeguard and did actually safeguard until some time after the Holy Alliance had fallen to pieces. But war had also been made on the social theories of the French revolution. It was assumed at Vienna that these theories had collapsed with the fall of Napoleon, and Europe reorganised itself as though the revolution had never been. The assumption was false, and the reorganisation was in peril almost as soon as it was complete. The revolutionary leaven began to work again at once, and at once attempts were made to repress its ferment. Hence it was that England five years after the peace found itself under a more reactionary Government than it had ever known during the war. By 1830 the revolutionary ideas had reasserted themselves, though their triumph in Europe was deferred until 1848. But in England the decisive date was 1832, and the medal which Napoleon struck to commemorate his entry into London might appropriately have been issued on the day that the House of Lords accepted the Reform Bill.

The parallel from Napoleonic times may serve to illuminate the situation which now confronts the world. When the war broke out, the Germans interpreted its motive by the obsolete historical formula. It was due, they said, to envy of Germany's industrial and commercial achievements. The Allies at least saw more clearly than that. They saw that they were fighting a social system based on the dominance of a military caste. What they did not see was that a deeper social question remained behind. The Russian revolution argued that German militarism itself owed much of its strength and all of its menace to its alliance with German capitalism, and that all the belligerent States were equally capitalistic.

This was the challenge with which the Paris Conference fumbled in its early days. There was a proposal to talk things over in the solitude of an island off Constantinople; but the revolution disdained to parley, and Paris retorted by excluding it from consideration. In the result, therefore, the Peace Treaties were doubly unsatisfactory. Not only did they fail to settle the old political issues which had provoked the war, but they did not even touch on the new social issue which the war had raised in its turn.

A breakdown was thus inevitable; the only question was whether it would be partial or complete.

Now that four years of Conferences have resulted in a Treaty of Versailles, re-edited by France according to purely Gallic conceptions of peace on the Rhine, it would seem as though the attempt at a collective settlement has entirely failed, and that each great Power will address itself in its own way to the questions which immediately concern it. Even if the passive acquiescence of Britain and the hesitating co-operation of Italy be emphasised as tokens of unbroken sympathy with France, the lack of solidarity between the Allies is obvious. In truth, contending impulses are everywhere at work, disgust with the present against confidence in the future, a practical sense of immediate needs against the tradition of inherited feuds. On the other hand, Europe has become aware that it has been thrown back upon itself, and has already made a first tentative appeal to its own resources. There were no official representatives of the New World at Genoa. But the representation of Europe was complete, whereas at Paris the treatment of the Continent's affairs was left to the delegates of the victorious belligerents; and the more comprehensive gathering displayed so much moderation and sanity that even the spokesmen of the revolution were almost persuaded into compromise. It may be that Genoa would have achieved more had its activities been less limited.

There were moments when it developed a spirit to tranquillise Europe. But reparations were excluded from its purview, and their exclusion left Genoa helpless in the face of Europe's main problem.

Nevertheless, the Genoa Conference make as clear line of division in European politics.[1] It was a last attempt to get the continent settled on the Versailles basis. It failed, and disaster has followed hard upon its failure, six months having sufficed to expose the latent impossibilities of the situation in East and West alike. In the East the time for full reconsideration has not yet come, and cannot come until definite relations are established between Russia and the Western world. But the incapacity of Greece to execute the important task assigned to her made a fresh Turkish treaty imperative, and it is noteworthy how complete a change of spirit was revealed in the new negotiations. The mere fact of negotiations sufficiently betrays it. Paris did not negotiate; it issued its orders. At Lausanne, on the contrary, the Allied representatives were at the utmost pains to assure Turkey

[1] This essay endeavours to take full account of the dividing line thus drawn. Genoa outlined the situation with which constructive thought must deal, and opinion has now almost accomplished its transition from a general acceptance of the Treaties to a general recognition of their uselessness. Events since midsummer 1922 are accordingly regarded as marking stages in this process of transition, and will only be discussed in so far as they contribute new permanent factors to the situation. The collapse of Greece is such a factor; the occupation of the Ruhr is not, inasmuch as it was logically involved in France's withdrawal of reparations from the Genoa agenda.

of her place as a State among other States, and were scrupulous in avoiding proposals repugnant to her sense of national sovereignty. This is the temper which makes peace, if peace be possible. In the West, where peace has been possible, a similar temper has unhappily not been able to assert itself. In vain did Mr. Lloyd George use his best efforts to evoke it; the essential thing was wanting—a definite situation round which opinion could be induced to consolidate. In the Treaty of Versailles, as eventually signed, France sacrificed, for the sake of an alliance with Britain and America, guarantees on which she would have insisted had she stood alone. When the Alliance collapsed France felt herself driven back on her original terms, and the vote of the American Senate logically involved the occupation of Essen. The long interval between the two events is due mainly to a pathetic reluctance to admit that the bottom had been knocked out of a settlement so laboriously reached. Hence the hope so long reposed in transatlantic finance, it being presumed that private Americans would rush in where the American Government had refused to tread. But this optimism was unwarranted. Finance shrank from a situation which statesmanship had not yet rendered malleable, and the break in the mark which attended the failure of the bankers' conference

was a judgment upon the economic provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. The truth, clear since Genoa, is no longer burked, even though France has chosen to try the effect of an appeal to force. For France herself no longer clings to the fantastic totals enumerated at Spa, and the occupation of the Ruhr would have fluttered no dovecotes had it been no more than a device for testing Germany's capacity to pay. It has caused such general tension throughout Europe because it is thought to have been inspired by political motives and is seen to be productive of political effects. To those who believe that where there's a will there's a way, even in diplomacy, this tension appears to be of hopeful omen in the last resort. Whoever is adequately sensitive to it will be brought to realise that the settlements signed in the various suburbs of Paris are futile and that the peace must be remade as a whole and not only in its more conspicuously defective parts.

The conditions which will attend its remaking are not altogether unfavourable. As a result, partly of the confusion caused by the breakdown, partly of the work of the Genoa Conference, there has grown up all over Europe a desire for a peace systematically thought out according to the general sense of what is fair and reasonable, and consequently able to restore tranquillity to a harassed

continent. But widespread though this desire is, and powerful though its effects have been on the domestic politics of both Britain and Italy, it hesitates to assert itself in Germany and above all in France, both countries being still under the spell of the war years when thought was necessarily dominated by feeling. Moreover, it has quite failed to find means of expression. The available instruments have all broken under the test of events. The Supreme Council has failed because it was divided, the League of Nations because it was weak, and the European Congress because it was circumscribed. These successive failures have opened the way to piecemeal treatment, from the now manifest dangers of which Europe can only be saved by a strong assertion of its collective consciousness. It is easier to discuss the need than to prescribe the method, but since every little helps it has seemed to the writer worth while to make a fresh attempt to set our difficulties in their historical perspective, and to show that, however much they possess our minds, the war and its consequences are only items, and perhaps not predominant items, in the political inheritance of civilisation.

The reader will thus perceive that some pains have gone to the making of this little book, and may therefore, perhaps, approach it with a touch of

sympathy. Its tone is, as has been said, deliberately dispassionate, but much feeling lies behind the academic analysis which it submits. Its results, too, may be of some practical moment if, by projecting the light of the past upon the future, it should haply indicate the ideal qualities of a democratic peace. After all, we to whose hands the initial work of reconstruction mainly falls have nothing left to live for except the hope of bequeathing a better world to those who come after us and of averting from future generations such a catastrophe as has involved our own interests and affections in shipwreck. Humanity could experience no worse tragedy than the collapse of the aspirations which we have cherished at such a cost; and their failure through misdirection of the forces which we have ourselves organised and whose strength was abundantly manifested during the war, would be a devil's triumph too hideous to contemplate. An academic voice has little likelihood of a hearing in these days when the passions born of disappointed hopes prompt the illusion that decisions will be final if they be sweeping; but we must all testify to the truth that is in us and offer our modest contributions to the stock of wisdom with such confidence as we may.

CHAPTER II

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HISTORICAL METHOD

In the opening days of the war a shower of diplomatic documents descended upon the world. All the belligerent States published papers to justify and explain their embroilment. The evidence thus set forth was avowedly incomplete. The Foreign Offices concerned had, indeed, been at pains to select their matter so as to interpret irreconcilable standpoints and to establish opposed policies. But all these collections or selections had one quality in common; they raised the curtain suddenly upon the theatre of events. Save for a despatch included in the French Yellow Book there was no hint that the crisis of July, 1914, was other than a bolt from the blue—no reference to the series of diplomatic storms that had swept over Europe in the previous decade, no admission that the peace of the world had long been in jeopardy, and that a precarious equilibrium had only been preserved by laborious compromises. Contemporary opinion was, of course, fully aware of this ominous background to the immediate causes of the war, and in England stress was laid from the

first on the menace inherent in the whole political attitude of Germany over a long space of years. So much grasp of ultimate tendencies there had to be, if definite ideals of peace were to be pursued; and the British mind is far too practical to make war in the dark. But with this rather vague consciousness that Britain was opposing her might not to an isolated act, but to a system of thought, our people were content.

Their contentment will not be shared by history —least of all by any history written during the present phase of human thought. For not even the most meticulous German scholarship would now submit that the precise investigation of detail is the sole object of historical study. The business of history is not to record events but to interpret them, and it is only by its principles of interpretation that it gives cohesion to its chronicle of human struggle. Rob it of its interpretative criteria and history ceases to expound a theory of progress and becomes a nightmare of antagonistic persons and systems. But these criteria themselves change with changes in the master-principles of human thought. To-day thought lies under the spell of the word evolution. We consider that we understand a thing when we see it in its place at the end of a causal sequence. Our question is always, why did this thing befall thus, and the answer to it

interests us more than the thing itself. In mediæval times thought was not content until it had referred all facts to an ultimate miracle; to-day we have boxed the compass and refer fact back to fact on fact until we have traced the sequence to its origin and can exhibit the chain of events as possessing the causal certainty of natural law.

There is thus an air of inevitability about history as conceived nowadays. Viewed too narrowly it appears as a callous art, the parent of pessimism. Men are depicted as acting under the influence of forces which preceded their birth and will outlast their death. Human endeavour wastes itself in hopeless reconciliations of opposites which at last clash and involve in their struggle those who had vainly sought to master them. Movements sweep on to their ordained conclusions across the lives of generations, and man with his ideals seems minute and futile. Above all, war, thus studied in the light of its causes, stripped of the agony and passion which ennoble it for those who wage it and inspire them to make the utmost sacrifice for a future they know they will never see—war is displayed as humanity's last, blind, desperate acknowledgment of its own incompetence.

The whole truth cannot lie in this view even though we are confronted with it by a mode of thought of such approved and satisfying accuracy

that we composedly beg the question and term it historical. Be the logical sequence never so cogent, men still deny it by their hopes and by giving themselves for their hopes. And it is because the whole truth is felt not to be revealed here that the art of biography—the very contradiction of this aspect of history—was never so popular as now. But the partial truth holds. It is true that the full import of events is something beyond and more fundamental than the personalities of the men who shape them. That truth is of special value now when the catastrophic horror of the war leaves us dazed and doubtful where we stand. At such a time the attempt to appreciate even this chaos as the result of order, as the shock of forces which can be seen slowly gathering strength throughout the centuries, cannot but serve to confirm policy and to satisfy ideals; and the task of discerning amid this waste and destruction the achievement of a new stage in human progress, the foundation of a new synthesis in which old antagonisms will vanish, is not unworthy of the speculative mind.

It is a task, moreover, which has now become a necessity of statesmanship. Everywhere throughout a disappointed and exasperated world the contrast is urged between the visions inspired by the assembly of the Paris Conference and the

niggardliness and self-seeking which disfigures so much of its work. Who are in the right: the critics with their attack on the purblind old diplomacy which has missed its opportunity of making the world anew, or the apologists with their plea that victory could not but sharpen the bitter memories of ancient wrongs, and that force must recover what force once took? The cleavage of opinion goes deep, so that the future of the world turns on whether the Treaty of Versailles is regarded as establishing, despite errors of method, the principles of a new order, or as restating, with blind obstinacy, conceptions which progressive humanity has outgrown. Historical study is too familiar with the incalculable element in human affairs to presume to dogmatise on so broad an issue. But it can at least point out that the very divergence of view expressed in discussions on the Treaty is inherent in the provisions of the Treaty itself. On the one hand Britain, France, Italy, and America have all acted in complete accordance with their traditions. Britain expands overseas to-day no less than when she secured the Cape in 1815 and Canada in 1763. She imposes the freedom of the seas on Germany now as she imposed it on Russia after the Crimea, and on Spain in the eighteenth century. M. Clemenceau, pressing for the frontier not only of 1870 but of

1814, and insisting that German armies shall not concentrate in fortresses erected behind the barrier of the Rhine, translates the policy of Louis XIV. into the terms of modern military tactics. Italy incorporates Germans and Slavs within her frontiers in uncompromising pursuit of the ideals which have possessed her for a century, and in making her first steps in a foreign policy based on completed unity at once lays claim to the Adriatic Empire of Venice. America is brought into the struggle by that same moral indignation which armed the North against the South, and is repudiating the consequences of her own conduct in deference to the caution against foreign entanglements which Washington bequeathed to his successors. Nor does historical analysis merely explain the achievements of the Paris Conference. It also gives the clue to its failures. In its hesitation in dealing with the Turkish question, in its bewilderment when confronted with unparalleled phenomena in Russia, in its caution in allowing for the play of new forces in future politics, the Conference has proved itself the child of the past, and were Castlereagh to return to this world to-morrow he would find himself drawn to President Wilson by sympathetic ties of parallel experiences.

On the other hand, the Treaty shows that statesmanship has at last sought to master the lesson

forced on it by every crisis since the mediæval world was consumed in the flames of the renaissance and the reformation. All through the middle ages there existed, at least in theory, a supreme tribunal before which even sovereign disputants could appear without loss of dignity. When the judgments of men differed irreconcilably the judgment of God could be invoked through the mouth of His acknowledged vicar upon earth. But when the sentiment of mankind refused to accept the authority of the Papacy as supreme, appeal was necessarily made to the opinion of mankind itself. International lawyers in the seventeenth century, historical philosophers in the eighteenth, journalists in the nineteenth, have successively proclaimed themselves the mouthpieces through which the verdicts of civilisation were pronounced.

At late last civilisation is to be equipped with a mouthpiece of its own. The criticisms levelled against the League of Nations' Covenant are entirely misplaced. The League has no force at its back; true, but it is not projected as a giant keeping order among quarrelsome dwarfs. The League demands an improbable unanimity ; true, but if civilisation speaks with two voices it were hypocrisy to stifle one of them. In a democratic world which bases its conduct of affairs on the belief that average opinion is best in the long run

because it has the most solid weight behind it, the League cannot be broader and greater than the spirit of the time. There is nothing Nietszchean about it. Its wisdom is to be the wisdom of the average elector impressed on average ministers through average representative assemblies, and when two great groups of average men are hopelessly at variance the remaining groups cannot do more than persuade them to agree to differ instead of fighting it out. Only on the group which refuses to listen to persuasion is there to be brought the pressure of a boycott. The League, in fact, as the Covenant creates it, is neither a world State nor a world judge, but it is a world jury. Its difficulty, as is already apparent, will be to hear the case. Disputes between nations, in so far as they make bad blood, contain much that is irrelevant to their merits. Their roots go round and beneath the immediate issues deep into the past and are held firm by the heritage of tradition which it has bequeathed. Who could hope to understand the Irish question, for example, if he ruled that as Cromwell and William III. were long since dead, their names and policies must not be introduced into the discussion? It is no answer to say that the mention of ancient enmities complicates actual problems to the point of insolubility. The retort comes pat that a superficial

solution only aggravates the original dissension, and that when every crack has been beautifully papered over the whole structure incontinently collapses. In the decade before 1914 we papered over cracks enough from Morocco to the Persian Gulf; but, as the deliberations of the Paris Conference have shown, the war was essentially a Mediterranean war. It began with a conflict between Slav and Teuton at Belgrade; it ended with a conflict between Slav and Latin at Fiume; and if the new conflict is not to spread as catastrophically as the old, if the jury is able to pronounce upon the case in terms which disputants will accept, that will only be because it recognises that there is more at stake than a quarrel between traders about a harbour. All the world over, from China to Peru it is the same story—to be precise, from Mongolia, which China proposes to assimilate, to Arica, which Peru hopes to regain. Wherever the maps indicate disputed or disputable territory, there history points to ancient rivalries of which the League must take account if its decisions are to be more than trivial and impotent pieces of patchwork. The mission of the League is to reduce inherited passions by the slow emollient of principle, and it cannot apply its remedy with effect unless it understands the symptoms which it seeks to treat. Least of all can

it hope to work without a clear insight into the circumstances from which it derives its own existence, authority, and function.

But in seeking to produce the historical atmosphere in which alone the League can draw breath of life, constructive thought undertakes no light task. As a mere prelude it requires a theory of origins of a war which involved almost all Europe. It must, therefore, strive to envisage the whole of European history and to simplify its multitudinous episodes into two or three main streams of European development.

The effort bears with particular severity on an Englishman. For generations at a time the Englishman maintains towards European affairs an attitude of contemptuous ignorance dignified by some such euphemism as "splendid isolation." In these moods he does not even think of himself as a European, but gives his energies to his own special business of transoceanic expansion. Once every century or so, however, a ferment in Europe demands his somewhat irritated attention. After brief study he takes sides—takes sides with emphasis and passion—and flings himself into the fray. It is significant that these occasional excursions into Continental Europe, in which this country has no territorial interests, stir national feeling like nothing else and command an overwhelming

measure of popular support. It was so in the war just ended. It was so in the three great French wars of the century before last. It was so in the Elizabethan war with Spain. The fact suggests that there must be some comparatively simple political formula which regulates England's dealings with the neighbouring continent. But if this be so European affairs must themselves be capable of being formularised, or at least of being reduced to some few crucial and recurrent issues. In fact, the successful search for the formula of British European policy will simultaneously place the present war in the sequence of general European development, and so leave the historical instinct satisfied and the practical reason equipped for handling the problems of the hour.

CHAPTER III

THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF THE WAR

A SERIOUS obstacle threatens to nullify the inquiry at the outset. The historical method collapses for lack of matter if the immediate cause of the war prove also its ultimate cause. For the immediate cause of war was catastrophic, and—though not altogether unrelated to past events, and especially to the policy of the Hapsburg monarchy, itself a tolerably constant factor in European affairs—cannot fairly be described as inevitable. At the utmost the annexation of Bosnia and the consequent increase of tension between Austria-Hungary and Serbia had pointed to the possibility of an act of political assassination. But the most disastrous aspects of the murder of the Archduke were accidental. Chance directed the blow against the man who, so far as our evidence goes, had not initiated or supported the anti-Serb policy. Chance—the prolongation of an old man's feeble life—had made the murdered man co-Emperor rather than heir. Chance had made the succession pass again from the direct line to an unknown and inexperienced collateral.

But these combined chances lose their haphazard aspect when viewed as administering a most severe shock to the monarchical system of Europe. To-day, when the central mass of Europe is solidly republican, and a ring of monarchies maintains a somewhat precarious tenure of the Continent's coast, it is hard to think oneself back into the days when monarchy seemed the traditional system for Europeans, as suited to their temperament as republicanism to the ideas of the new world. When the war broke out there were—omitting such curiosities as Andorra and San Marino—no more than three republics in Europe, and in only one of these was the republican organisation of the State thoroughly secure. The cantons of Switzerland, like the States of the American union, were forced into confederation by external pressure, and, like them, found in republican institutions the one sure guarantee of local independence. But in France the republic, which had barely emerged from the shock and stress of the Dreyfus affair, still bore out Thiers's description of it as the form of Government which divides us least, and in Portugal the republic born of a Lisbon riot was barely able to make headway against monarchist risings in the provinces. So ingrained was the monarchical habit of thought that only a few years before the war the kingdom of Norway

was established by the vote of a democratic and liberty-loving people, while in the previous half-century, the Balkan nations, on shaking off the Turkish yoke, sought to establish a permanent claim to a place on the map of Europe by the choice and acceptance as their sovereigns of princelings of some ancient house. The wisdom of experience can now observe that the prestige of monarchy in Europe exceeded its usefulness. It notes, moreover, that on the whole the institution was of more recent date than average opinion was wont to suppose. All the thrones of Europe except four—those of Britain, Russia, Austria-Hungary and Turkey—were more or less directly creations of the nineteenth century. The wonderful prestige of Britain at the close of the Napoleonic wars tempted every country in Europe to copy her institutions, of which constitutional monarchy was the most conspicuous. But constitutional monarchy demands as a condition of its success a full and free party life. On the Continent this condition was wanting. Either party life was not full or it was not free. Where parties were all organised on the basis of accepting the monarchy they tended to degenerate into mere groups of selfish and often corrupt politicians who shared the sweets of office by arrangement; and where parties took a wider range and included a republican

left, the opposition was continually hampered by the fact that its enmity was directed not against this or that measure but against the whole existing régime. A party disaffected to the State in which it is an element must needs owe such freedom as it enjoys either to its own readiness to compromise with its principles or to the toleration or cowardice of its opponents.

The fate of constitutional monarchy in Europe was really decided in 1848. France is the schoolmistress from whom all the Continent takes lessons in politics, and the revolution of 1830 had given France institutions on the English model. The new system was established under the happiest auspices. The King was understandingly sympathetic, while Guizot and Thiers raised the tone of Parliamentary debate to a level which even Englishmen might envy. But from the first the logical French mind found something unreal in discussions, however brilliant, of compromises between parties which did not really differ. The French imagination refused to confine politics within such narrow limits, and after eighteen years the monarchy fell tamely and unregretted. The cautious conservatism of the middle classes who came to the front everywhere in Europe in the period of reconstruction after 1848 concealed the consequences of the fall. The prestige of constitutional monarchy showed

indeed an apparent growth. The bourgeois genius of Cavour, the commonsense patriotism of Victor Emmanuel, and the readiness of Garibaldi to attain his end by the first available means, succeeded in establishing the system in Italy despite the republican tradition with which the movement towards unity was bound up. In Spain the Alfonsist dynasty, restored almost as a counsel of despair, proved a true antidote to revolutionary chaos. In most of the smaller States the sovereigns showed a certain quiet sagacity which chimed in with popular aspirations towards material prosperity. But in Europe as a whole monarchy ceased to perform its proper constitutional function. It did not at once stimulate and control party feeling. It did not pervade and regulate the national life. If it was not to decline into insignificance—its fate in Portugal—it must needs look to some other source of strength than the support of alternating parties. Bismarck, with characteristic realism, dealt with the situation in true Prussian fashion. If the King could not depend on voters he could depend on troops, and the throne which parliamentary majorities could not safeguard should be protected by the officers' corps. In the half century before the war Teuton influence steadily expanded across the continent, and, wherever the Prussian idea penetrated, monarchies ceased to

be constitutional and became militarist. Hence it was that when militarism itself was overthrown by the forces it had challenged, the thrones which it had upheld crashed down in immediate and almost simultaneous ruin. Hence, too, the States that had been born out of the crisis, no less than the States forced to begin life anew amid the ruin of their ambitions, turned to republican institutions. The great and inspiring example of France, reinforced by the decisive weight of America in the closing phase of the war, gave an air of political reasonableness to forms of Government inevitable under the circumstances.

The development is one in which every lover of freedom can rejoice. It guarantees to the old States, our late enemies, that definite break with the past without which they cannot hope for admission into a society of pacific nations. It guarantees to the leaders of the new States a position in which they can complete their work. Men of the calibre of Masaryk and Pilsudski cannot take their places in the ranks, or at the head, of Czech and Polish parties. There are no parties big enough to hold them. The creators of States cannot suddenly become partisans of the Right or the Left in the States they have created. M. Venizelos, indeed, devised the expedient of a puppet monarchy in the hope of reconciling the

functions of a President with the title of Prime Minister. But Greek feeling, curiously responsive to its traditions, scented a tyranny, and M. Venizelos, appreciating his countrymen's instinct, withdrew from public life. Perhaps it would be better for the future of Ireland if the authors of the Free State's constitution had been warned by his fate from making their attempt to harmonise incompatibilities. For exceptional times throw up exceptional men who must be given a status of exceptional freedom; but constitutions are made for the sake of humdrum days, and should provide for them by defining and limiting executive functions so that every holder of them will surely be kept in his place. When those days return, as return they must, Europe will learn, as America has already learnt, that Republicanism confuses the chief of the State with the leader of one of its parties, and that the two can only be kept distinct by our British method of the choice of a House whose members are trained from the cradle to the performance of their unique duties. The more vigorous the party life of a nation—and in a healthy nation party life must be vigorous—the harder must it become to choose from the citizen body a head of the State who is not either a partisan or a nonentity. This is the inherent defect of Republicanism, and emphasis is thrown upon it by

Presidents of the calibre of a Pilsudski and a Masaryk, the very quality of whose achievements will make it impossible for them to have legitimate successors.[1]

Allowance must also be made for another and less subtle factor. Throughout central Europe the middle classes have generally abandoned the monarchies which they upheld before the war. They have become republicans, partly from genuine political conviction, partly through the example of their leading men. Now the successful middle-class man, who has fully grasped the fact that money is power, is the most ambitious fellow alive. Why should he be content with a decoration when a presidential chair awaits his occupancy? But the fallen banner of monarchy seems likely to be raised anew by the masses, awakened as they have been by the excesses of their extremist leaders to the ease with which Republicanism passes into dictatorship. Any tradition, however short its term, attracts humble men just feeling their footing on the slippery ground of politics. It gives, or seems to give, something to stand upon. Partly from sheer

[1] Pilsudski adroitly resigned his Presidency as soon as Poland's expansionist policy placed the country's future in the hands of the army. As chief of the staff with a presidential figurehead, Pilsudski is still master of Poland, and will not sleep the less soundly because his change of title reinforces an anti-republican argument.

indolent conservatism, partly from an honourable longing for orderly government, the masses of central Europe are reacting towards monarchy. The peasantry of Hungary are admittedly royalist; the provinces of Austria leave Red Vienna to starve, and royalist demonstrations in Munich are not the exclusive work of ex-officers.

These symptoms are worth noting here because they serve to recall the potency of monarchy in the Europe of 1914. The system was popular. It had shown vitality and adaptability. Above all, during the course of the nineteenth century it had become the very core of the structure of European peace. Diplomatists might throw dust in one another's eyes, but when monarchs, friends of old standing and often akin in blood, met together and talked matters over in familiar intimacy, difficulties were wont to disappear. It was not an accident that the last hope of peace vanished in 1914 when the Kaiser charged the Tsar with an arrant breach of faith—a charge for which, as the Sukomlinoff trial has since shown, there was some foundation in fact. It followed, then, from the nature of the European system as constituted before the war, that when a king was murdered the shock was felt throughout the continent. Franz Ferdinand was a king in all but name, and in the empire which he helped to rule the monarchy

played a more vital part than in any State except our own. It is a commonplace of British policy that the Throne is the essential cohesive force in the Empire. In Austria-Hungary the same statement was not a commonplace, but the first principle of Government. Austria-Hungary was an artificial State—an agglomerate of peoples differing in speech, thought, and faith, each with strong national impulses, and all mutually intolerant. One bond, and one only could hold them together, the bond of common allegiance to the same sovereign, himself the wearer of many crowns. When this bond snapped—as it snapped in Italy in the 'fifties and in Germany in the 'sixties—the integrity of the Empire could no longer be preserved. It was because the personal tie could not withstand the strain of a long and cruel war that Austria-Hungary, for all its long imperial history, finally vanished like a puff of smoke. The collapse was the more complete because, as the war became more intense, the Dual Monarchy passed under German control. Held in the Prussian vice, the last Hapsburg Emperor, despite occasional struggles, was unable to pursue the traditional dynastic policy of his House. Yet this was the policy by which the Hapsburgs ruled and by which alone they could rule. It was by this policy that Francis Joseph saved his Empire in the crises of 1848 and 1866.

As an old man he was not afraid to proclaim the secret of his statecraft. When, on the occasion of his diamond jubilee, he received the congratulations of the rulers of Germany, with William II. at their head, he delivered in reply a little address on Government—perhaps the only time in his reign when he permitted himself the luxury of thinking aloud. Looking back and summing up the experience of sixty years, he laid it down that the strength of Austria-Hungary lay in the monarchical principle. It was in deference to this principle that, in his closing years, he entered into partnership with an heir whom he is understood to have disliked; and it is possible that anger at the spectacle of a life's work made null and void induced him to sanction the vindictive note that plunged Europe into war.

Contemporary opinion, actuated mainly, no doubt, by prejudice and passion, but in part deferring to the influence of the historical method, was inclined to brush aside the Archduke's murder as a mere pretext of which Germany's aggressive soldier-politicians hastened to avail themselves. It has been urged that official Germany was long convinced that another war was necessary to German plans of expansion, that preparations had been made for this war, and that these preparations produced the situation which they contemplated. It has also

been urged that after the Balkan wars Germany advanced the anticipated date of the great outbreak, and the huge War Levy of 1913 gives some colour to this view. But, in spite of much confident assertion, it has yet to be demonstrated that Germany's selected moment was August 1914, when the War Levy was still largely uncollected and the latest Navy Act had barely begun to yield results.

Perhaps the truth can be expressed in a simile. In the days of peace, journalism made play with a catch-phrase about the spark that would fire the European powder magazine. We have all learnt something of munitions since then, and know that high explosive cannot be fired by sparks. It requires a detonator. Europe in 1914 was full of political high explosive, for whose manufacture Berlin bears the chief responsibility. But the detonator was the death of the Archduke. It may be that Berlin, looking back on the many crises of the previous decade, felt that it could confidently leave the detonation to chance. In any case history must emphasise the point that the immediate cause of the explosion was no mere trifle but a formidable event which, even under more favourable conditions, was bound to have given rise to far-reaching effects.

CHAPTER IV

THE EASTERN QUESTION AND THE AUSTRO-RUSSIAN WAR

One of these effects was the re-opening of the Eastern question. The very word—for a political issue does not come to be styled a question unless it has persisted unsolved for centuries—suggests the appearance of one of the master-threads of European history. The Eastern question stretches from the Dardanelles expedition back across time until it is lost in the legendary mists of the siege of Troy. Yet, persistent though it is, it has never ceased to be other than an interruption of European affairs, an exasperating reminder that the continent is a peninsula, liable to disturbance from the great adjacent masses of Asia and Africa. During comparatively recent times—that is to say, for the last 900 years or so—the Eastern question owes a certain unity to the fact that there has been one continuous disturbing agent—the Turk.

Europe's quarrel with the Turk has passed through three phases. The earlier crusades show Europe as the aggressor. It carries the war into the enemy's country with the political motive of

re-establishing the battered and decadent Eastern Roman Empire and the religious motive of re-capturing the Holy Places of Christendom for the Cross. With the passage of the middle ages into the renaissance the old religious impulse waned and the initiative passed to the enemy. In the fourteenth century he secured a foothold in Europe. In 1453 he captured Constantinople and began an offensive which lasted nearly 250 years. (We, who found our war almost interminable, may profitably remember that it was short as history counts time.) Late in the seventeenth century the tide of Turkish conquest was stayed under the walls of Vienna and immediately began to ebb. The lapse of another hundred years created the Eastern Question as we know it. It became clear that the life had gone out of the Turk and that he was surely destined to vanish utterly from Europe. Rival powers began their squabble for the sick man's inheritance; the testament of Peter the Great became a policy instead of an inspiration, and the attitude of the Central and Western European States towards Russia was gradually dominated by their views as to the possession of Constantinople.

This comparative novelty of the Eastern question constitutes one of its outstanding peculiarities. If Nero, or for that matter Alexander the Great,

had revisited the Eastern Mediterranean in the time of Charlemagne the one thing he would have noted as an inexplicable change would have been the churches. In all its other features the Eastern Mediterranean world remained substantially unchanged. Its hinterland had been narrowed and a different type of barbarian was performing police duty; but in other aspects, apart from Christianity, it was a development and not a transformation of the Eastern Mediterranean as Alexander left it. Of that world not a vestige remained six centuries later. The Turk swept it all away, and the Turk is so recent that his invasion did not reach its zenith until after Cromwell was in his grave. What a contrast from Western Europe, where the transformation of the antique world was complete by the beginning of the ninth century, and where no new racial elements have since been introduced.

On the other hand, the development of Western Europe since Charlemagne has been conditioned by ideal factors. Renaissance, reformation, and revolution, invading ideas not invading armies, have fashioned Western European history. The Turk has not contributed a single idea, not even his faith, except sporadically in Bosnia and Thrace. The ideas of Western Europe have thus been devoted without check to the removal of the Eastern obstruction and have dictated the methods

employed. Two consequences have followed. In the first place the Teutons, late comers into the circle of Western European ideas though they were, have at any rate participated in them. In the West they may still be semi-barbarians, but in the East, as they are themselves fully aware, they are the apostles of progress. In the second place the Turk has turned Eastern Europe into a palimpsest on which, beneath his own scrawls and blots the chemistry of time is bringing out the original script of developing nationalism. When analysed out the history of the Eastern question will be found to be nothing but the detailed evidence for the general conclusions here stated.

Close on a century ago the War of Greek Independence inaugurated the re-emergence of pre-Turkish Europe and pointed a new way to the eventual solution of the Eastern question. It became clear that the peoples of Eastern Europe had not lost their self-consciousness during the period of Turkish domination. Rather their sense of nationality had been kept, as it were, in cold storage until the subtle corrosion of time checked the action of the refrigerator. During the nineteenth century the view that the Slav was the ultimate heir to the Turk made steady though somewhat difficult progress. But who was the Slav? The independent Balkan States—Greece, Serbia,

Bulgaria, and Rumania—could all point to men of their faith, tongue, and sympathies beyond their political frontiers. Moreover, all could stake out claims in that no-man's-land of nations, Macedonia. To add to the complexities of the situation the outbreak of war found the majority of the Southern Slavs included in two highly artificial political agglomerates—the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. In them were also incorporated remnants of the Poland which, when Slavdom first arose, had so gloriously championed its crusade against the infidel. But Austria-Hungary and Russia were not merely the heirs by theft of Poland's glories. They were themselves enemies of the Turk before Poland was dismembered, and long before the complications of Balkan nationalism had begun to vex politicians. And of the two Austria was distinctly the better representative of the main European tradition. From the classical world she was indeed as alien as Russia herself; but she was the very incarnation of the mediæval world which was built out of the ruins of the Roman Empire. On the Rhine the Teuton might stand for all that was backward in mediævalism; but on the Danube he represented all its advance on pure barbarism. This was to become a point of momentous importance when it presented itself to the whole

Teutonic world in an expansionist mood. But the nineteenth century had passed before that mood became dominant, and the Eastern question, as middle-aged men remember it, implies a zealous rivalry not between Teuton and Slav, but between Austria-Hungary and Russia in exploiting the new Balkan nations with a view to the eventual ownership of the Turk's estate, and in particular of his choicest European properties.

Such was the problem which first confronted Europe in all its naked ugliness in 1878. No wonder that Europe failed to solve it. Its solution has not been reached yet, and already the effort has cost three local wars, has destroyed the Russian Empire, and has swept away the Hapsburg monarchy as an obstructive anachronism. In 1878, when the ultimate issues had not become manifest, Europe produced a compromise—the Treaty of Berlin, universally condemned nowadays, but nevertheless for thirty years the bulwark of European peace. The Treaty of Berlin, framed under the influence of Bismarck's severely material theories of statesmanship, endeavoured to accept the facts as they were. It recognised the claims of the Balkan States to independent life. It recognised the ambitions of the two great Near Eastern Powers. It recognised the Near Eastern interests of Britain, France, and Italy; and finally,

it recognised that the Turkish monarchy must still somehow be preserved. A settlement which for a generation allowed adequate play to such varied and irreconcilable forces, deserves some better criticism than a cheap sneer at the selfishness and short-sightedness of nineteenth century diplomacy.

In 1908 Austria-Hungary tore up the Treaty of Berlin. She annexed the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina which she had hitherto administered under its provisions and simultaneously incited the Prince of Bulgaria to repudiate the Sultan's suzerainty and to proclaim his independence. The motives which induced the wary Francis Joseph to sanction this abrupt and startling change of policy are still obscure. Opinion of the day inclined to attribute it to an old man's impatience at the quiescent policy forced upon him after 1866, and to a desire to bequeath to his heir a realm no less vast than that to which he had himself succeeded. The time is not yet ripe to pass judgment upon Francis Joseph, always a very secretive person, but any such view as this is hard to harmonise with the level-headed appreciation of facts which dictated his domestic policy. Moreover, other influences were clearly at work. The Serbs of the Kingdom and the Serbo-Croats of the Dual Monarchy had at last reconciled their religious

differences and had embarked upon a policy of vigorous nationalist agitation in the administered provinces. Turkey had undergone a revolution which seemed to have ushered in her last agony. Besides, what was to be done if the two provinces, still nominally a part of the Turkish Empire, claimed representation in the new Turkish Parliament? Further east, Macedonia was in a ferment. The arrangement known as the Mürsteg programme negotiated by Francis Joseph and Nicholas II. in personal conference, had broken down, and the beginnings of international control, while calling attention to the urgency of finding a remedy, had had the drawback of enabling Italy to further her Balkan ambitions. Under these circumstances it behoved Austria-Hungary to clarify her ambiguous position as a Balkan power. Above all, Austria-Hungary and Russia had ceased to act as mutual checks. The Russian arm of the balance was out of action. Russia had suffered a disastrous war, followed by a domestic crisis from which she had not fully emerged. Her paralysis was Austria-Hungary's opportunity, and on the whole it is matter for surprise that she waited till 1908 before taking action.

For the moment her bold move succeeded. Russia chafed, but bowed before the Austro-German combination. Already, however, her

circumstances had begun to improve and the old régime entered upon its final rally. The Tsar accepted the position created by the Treaty of Portsmouth, abandoned his far Eastern ambitions, and sought good relations with Japan. Internally the revolutionary spirit waned, thanks to the ability with which M. Stolypin addressed himself to the solution of the agrarian problem, which was the root of unrest. The Anglo-Persian agreement prepared the way for the Triple Entente. In a word, Russia was again free to devote herself to the satisfaction of her secular ambitions in the Black Sea basin.

She evolved an entirely new method. Historically Russia was the liberator of the Southern Slavs, but her work had always been done for a price. The creation of a new State was balanced by her own territorial aggrandisement. As the spiritual heirs of the Eastern Empire her monarchs claimed the eventual reversion of its temporal possessions. It was somewhat as though the successors of Charlemagne had been hereditary Popes with Rome in the hands of the barbarians. These ambitions on the part of Russia created the Eastern question in the form familiar to Victorian statesmen, and were responsible for much bad blood and once for an actual conflict between Russia and Britain. With India to hold against the threat of

invasion from the north, Britain naturally looked askance at the prospect of finding her adversary on the flank of her line of communications through the Mediterranean, and at the extinction of Turkey, whose possession of Asia Minor so neatly rounded off the British policy of guarding the Himalayan passes by a chain of buffer States. Yet, at every crisis, these material considerations only asserted themselves after the current of sentiment had run strongly the other way. Herself a conquering Power, with a strong and honourable sense of her obligations towards her subjects, Britain was genuinely shocked at the incapacity and injustice of Turkish rule. How could she without betrayal of her own ideals uphold an Empire whose principle was neglect tempered by violence? But her indignation at the disease moderated when she reflected on the remedy. The unspeakable Turk must stay because he could only be replaced by the intolerable Russ. The least activity on Russia's part chilled British ardour for Turkish reform—a fact which gives the clue to the vacillation of British Near Eastern policy both in the 'fifties and in the 'seventies. But by 1908 the lesson had been learnt by Russia, and she addressed herself to the problem of developing a forward policy in the Near East which would restore her prestige against Austria without prejudicing her

newly-found friendship with Britain. Such a policy demanded, as its governing condition, complete territorial disinterestedness on the part of Russia, and the Balkan League was its expression.

The diplomatic preliminaries to the formation of the Balkan League are still obscure, and the early publication of papers is the more desirable because the Near Eastern situation developed steadily into the European War. But wherever the project originated, and however keenly it was supported by the more far-sighted Balkan diplomatists, Russia was undoubtedly a party to it. So much became manifest when the League was on the point of dissolution. It was then revealed that the treaty of alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria contained a clause referring disputed points to the arbitration of the Tsar. The clause is almost sufficient evidence that the whole treaty owed its being to Russian inspiration. Well informed gossip fathered it upon M. de Hartvig, the Russian Minister at Belgrade. M. de Hartvig was notoriously an advocate of a forward Russian policy. In the days when Anglo-Russian relations were at their worst he represented his sovereign at Teheran, and his translation to the Near East was the first fruits of the agreement with Britain and the first hint of the new orientation of Russian policy. He died—*felix opportunitate mortis*—in

the week of crisis when Russia, her understanding with Britain converted into an alliance, was about to answer the Austrian challenge of 1908-9. It may be that this was what he had desired all along, but it is equally possible that his policy was really animated by the fine idealism which it professed. For a century the liquidation of the Eastern question had been postponed because it involved a European war. With the instinct of true statesmanship Hartvig offered a solution—or at least the preliminaries to a solution—which eliminated the Great Powers. The plan failed. But it only failed because the threatened disappearance of Turkey raised in its acutest form the question of the survival of that other anachronism, the Dual Monarchy.

The rapid and unexpected success of the Balkan League at once confronted Europe with the new issue. Harassed diplomatists met in London and arrived at a settlement which, as Sir Edward Grey said at the time, just averted a European War. Serbia was deprived of her window on the Adriatic, and Austria's worst dread was appeased. But the disappointed Serbs sought and found compensation further east. An unstable equilibrium, which Austria pointedly refused to support, was established by the Treaty of Bucharest; and Serbia, like Japan in 1895, was left, enlarged but

balked, to cherish dreams of renewing the struggle under more favourable diplomatic conditions. There followed a period of subterranean intrigue until the Archduke's murder suddenly unmasked the inherent impossibilities of the situation, and Europe, which had long felt the menace to its tranquillity created by the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, discovered in a trice that the enmity of two great Powers could become as acute as within the bosom of a nominally sovereign State as over the possession of disputed provinces. A war between Russia and Austria had, in fact, been impending for nearly six years. Whether it could have been avoided in 1914 is a point over which historians will probably continue to wrangle long after all the documents have been published. All that can be said now is that Germany found in a strained situation her own *casus belli*.

CHAPTER V

THE EASTERN QUESTION—GERMANY'S INTERVENTION AND AFTER

The intrusion of Germany into a Balkan quarrel was a most significant development. It gives the diplomatic clue to the whole war and brings us to a vital point in our analysis. Historically Germany had disinterested herself completely from Balkan affairs which, as Bismarck put it, were not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian Grenadier. Even when the Cretan question had reached its closing phase Germany, after giving moderate support to her ally, had withdrawn from the concert of Europe, and, in Prince Buelow's delicate words, had laid her diplomatic flute upon the table. In 1914 that attitude was catastrophically reversed.

The post-Napoleonic epoch had seen the gradual disruption of the projected permanent and conservative alliance of the enemies of Imperial France. France herself was quiescent, and the Allies began to tread divergent paths. With the memory of the Great War still recent, apprehensions of fresh discord led to the establishment of a fresh

compromise. There was elaborated a theory, which eventually became the dominant principle in European relations—the theory of the balance of power. In itself it was no novelty, but it took on a novel and extended form. It rested on the idea that no one Great Power should aggrandise itself without offering compensation to its chief rival. A system of mutual checks was thus introduced which tended to keep Europe steady. It was a system with obvious disadvantages. It raised issues difficult of adjustment, and so postponed the treatment of abuses and allowed them to become running sores. It foreshadowed a day when a century's accumulation of problems should be determinedly disposed of. It thus led to the grouping of Great Powers into alliances and to the competition of armaments against The Day. All these unhappy developments will require to be pondered over when the time comes for giving full practical effect to the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations. But the system of balance of power had one equally obvious merit. It postulated a sort of European consciousness. If gain on one side was to be balanced by compensation on the other, by what authority was the balance to be established? The disinterested States of Europe alone provided a tribunal backed by sufficient force to secure respect for its decisions,

and so, out of the balance of power, was evolved the principle that disputes about its preservation should be referred to a European Congress. The Crimean War, which historians too readily condemn as a blunder, was fought to establish this principle. The fall of Sebastopol compelled Russia to admit that her relations with Turkey were matter for all Europe and not merely of local interest. It is true that Russia was restive under the settlement imposed upon her, and seized the opportunity of the Franco-Prussian War to repudiate certain of its most obnoxious provisions. But when, in 1878, the old crisis was renewed, Russia bowed to the inevitable, allowed Europe to regulate the consequences of her victories, and acquiesced in the generous compensation awarded to Austria. It is possible that a European conference might have averted war in August 1914, as it certainly averted it in the autumn of 1912. The news that Austria had abandoned at the eleventh hour her view that her ultimatum to Serbia was the exclusive concern of herself and Serbia introduced a gleam of hope into the situation. Unhappily Germany had crossed the Rubicon. No sooner was the hope born than she strangled it by her declaration of war.

Her act was the climax of her new policy of aggressive intervention in Near Eastern affairs.

Of all the evidences of her resolve to destroy the established balance of power this policy is the most conclusive. Her demand for a place in the sun had given an unanticipated extension, amounting to a wholly new meaning, to the principle of compensation. Her claim was that she should be compensated for having attained her unity at a date when most of the earth's prizes had already passed into the safe keeping of others who had been beforehand with her in the settlement of their domestic issues. Had the directors of German policy during the decade before the war condescended to express their views in the terms of the political jargon invented in Petrograd and now generally fashionable, they would have pointed out that whereas England completed her self-determination between 1640 and 1689, and France hers between 1789 and 1793, the corresponding formative period in Germany fell between 1862 and 1871; and would have gone on to claim that all peoples should collaborate, as loyal members of the family of nations, in redressing the handicap imposed on Germany by her own lack of constructive political instinct. This was a claim which, in the world as Germany found it, could hardly be met without war; but her long and eventually very promising negotiations with Britain for the satisfaction of her ambitions in Asia and Africa are

proof of the efforts her neighbours made to give effect to it, just as her own accumulation of armaments by land and sea is proof of her belief that in the end an amicable arrangement would prove impossible.

Two circumstances, for each of which Germany is alone responsible, gradually blasted the prospects of accommodation. The first was that, in the decade before the war, Germany had stated her claim with increasingly provocative emphasis. Europe was told, almost in so many words, that she must lay aside all other business until she had given Germany her place in the sun, which implied in Asia and Africa at any rate—for South America lay beyond her immediate sphere—full room to bask in its territorial as well as in its economic rays. It had been very different in Bismarck's day. The old Chancellor was opposed to the idea of remote adventure. He felt it alien to the Teutonic political temperament. Austria, which for centuries before 1866 had been the leading German State, had never acquired a colony; Prussia herself had grown by the steady extension of her frontiers. Only in the territorial scramble known as the partition of Africa did Bismarck reluctantly admit that Germany's pride in her new position compelled her to demand her share. A change came with the accession of William II. For the first ten

years of his reign the Emperor was content in the main to stimulate his country's economic expansion; but with the seizure of Kiao Chau and the passage of his first Navy Law he enunciated the new doctrine that this expansion demanded an unimpeded territorial field for its activities, and that equal opportunity in competition sufficed it not.

In the second place the Emperor decided that German ambitions could best be satisfied in that most delicate region, the Near East. The Baghdad railway concession became the corner-stone of his policy, and a vision of a political federation which would make German influence supreme from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf floated before the eyes of his supporters. It is possible that at the outset German policy was sincere in protesting that it sought for nothing beyond opportunities for trade. But the Germans are a learned people. They were fully aware that the activities of a trading company had made the King of England Emperor of India, and were not slow to draw the parallel. In any case success soon bred contempt for caution. The phenomenal growth of German influence in Turkey during Baron Marschall von Bieberstein's long and able tenure of the Embassy at Constantinople startles the student of the period. Somewhere about the turn of the century there was a definite possibility of a combination

of Austria and Russia to check German aggression and to keep the field to themselves. The relations between the two antagonistic Near Eastern powers took a turn for the better, and Imperial courtesies were interchanged. But the German element in Austria was too strong and the Magyar oligarchy in Hungary too oppressive to allow the Dual Monarchy to pursue a policy which must in the end have exalted its Slavs; and when the final crisis came Austria was as putty in the hands of her ally. The new fact of German ambitions and the new idea of compensation to Germany for her own past were then seen to have driven Russia into a corner where she must either fight or forfeit not only her historical claims but her historical status as mother and protector of the Slav peoples. It had been possible for Russia, though not without painful sacrifices of her pride, to make concessions to Austria-Hungary as being a State which, though Teutonic in its Government, admitted and even fostered the Slav elements in its composition. But only by the betrayal both of her traditions and of her hopes could Russia yield a place, almost within her gates, to Germany, which was not only Teutonic but had proclaimed it her principle remorselessly to teutonise whatever she absorbed. Out of this direct clash of policies was born the Russo-German war. The implication of Austria,

the embroilment of Turkey, and the liquidation of the grudges left over from the second Balkan War followed as its successive and logical corollaries.

It would be a piece of intellectual cowardice to shirk the conclusions suggested by this tragic record of facts. After all, this system of checks and balances to be established and preserved by honest men sitting round a table and talking things over, represented the best effort of nineteenth century civilisation to maintain the peace which it sincerely valued for its own sake as well as for its economic opportunities. The Victorian temper, that matter-of-fact, cosmopolitan, practical attitude of mind which dominated Western Europe from 1848 till nearly the end of the century, was neither short-sighted nor dishonest; and particularly during the critical middle period between 1848 and 1870, when the map of Europe as traced by the Congress of Vienna was undergoing substantial modifications, it earnestly attempted both to face facts and to give them room. Yet its main work barely endures a generation when an upstart power bursts through its diplomatic entanglements as though they were cobwebs, wills war, and makes war because she wills it. It is not altogether surprising that the Prussian, who believed in himself and did not hide his light, should have claimed that *real-politik* was the gospel of the

future, that Prussia stood for progress in the world of her day as surely as did France in 1795, and that efficiency, a clear aim and a will to power were forces beneath whose impact the phrases and hesitations and compromises of the past would deservedly collapse. Let her go her way, bringing with her the fresh bracing atmosphere of reality and resolution, and leave these ghosts to twitter and squeak in the museum of middle-class political experiments! Such, even after the war, is the whole gospel of international politics according to Ludendorff. Men who profess enlightened opinions, and in virtue of them dub the balance of power a conscious fraud and the concert of Europe as opaque sham, should bethink them whether they are not really stating the Prussian doctrine in different terms.

In truth the matter is not so simple. Once, at any rate, the balance of power was not a fraud, and the concert of Europe which strove to maintain it was not a sham. The balance was a formula originally intended to settle a few delicate matters of adjustment, and the concert a substitute for that authoritative sanction which was stripped from the Papacy by the reformation. It was, in fact, a Western European idea devised to operate in a Western European environment. For Western Europe is, relatively speaking, stable. There are

few truly disputable areas, and of these only one, the Franco-German borderland west of the Rhine, constitutes a serious political problem. A frank talk can control a simple situation, and European congresses have done considerable good in their proper sphere, and notably in the decade after Waterloo, when they gave the Vienna settlement time to harden.

But Eastern Europe lies outside their proper sphere, and it is due mainly to the fantastic and wayward genius of Napoleon III. that the Congress method was ever applied to it. The areas in dispute were large, not small; the boundary lines of States were wholly fluid, not relatively stable; the entire situation was transient, not fixed; and, of the powers primarily concerned, Russia and Turkey, at any rate, were remote from the tradition of European unity, out of whose ruins the Congress theory was evoked. Accordingly we need write no pessimistic epitaph over Western European statesmanship because it failed in its experiment of applying a familiar but inadequate method to the solution of a problem whose inherent complexities had not been appreciated. But the problem remains; its solution urgently confronts civilisation. The Eastern question is still a question. The concert of Europe, the momentarily federated Balkan powers, the momentarily victorious Germany,

and the Great Alliance disintegrating because of the completeness of its triumph, have equally failed to answer it; the League of Nations must answer it or proclaim itself futile and still-born.

The problem remains, and its latest phase has all the embarrassment of the unexpected. To those who sought to forecast the prospects of the Peace Conference at the time of its assembly it seemed that the Near East at any rate presented a clean slate on which constructive statesmanship might write what it would. The Eastern question, as the earlier years of the century had known it, contained three main elements. There was first the spasmodic vitality of Turkey with her strange capacity for defending in war territories which she was incapable of governing in peace. There was, secondly, the rivalry between Austria and Russia, which grew more intense with every withdrawal of the Ottoman frontiers. There was, thirdly, the rapid development of German influence over Turkish policy and administration. The war had apparently involved all these elements in a common destruction; Turk and German, Hapsburg and Romanoff, had all vanished from the stage. Its very emptiness counselled delay, and the elaboration of the Treaty with Turkey was allowed to give place to other business seemingly more urgent. In the interval the ghosts of the old

actors prepared to walk the boards, and it is now clear that only the German has made his final exit.

The Hapsburg ghost appeared first and was least awaited. The liquidation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was to all appearance complete. Moreover, although deeply interested in the Eastern question, it was concerned rather with its western fringe, and even Constantinople lay beyond the range of its influence. The Hapsburgs were river kings. Their power took its rise near the source of the Danube, and in the course of centuries moved steadily down-stream. But it never claimed sovereignty over the peoples of the delta. An authority bordering on suzerainty represented its utmost ambitions In the hour of Austria's apparent triumph Count Czernin was well content to negotiate a peace which gave Vienna control of the Iron Gates. Constantinople thus lay utterly beyond the range of Austro-Hungarian imperialism. Both Vienna and Budapest were, however, concerned to find maritime outlets for the commerce of the provinces lying well to the south of the Danube valley. Access to the Adriatic, though partially impeded by Montenegro, was nevertheless open, and trunk lines of railway linked the interior of the monarchy with the ports of Trieste and Fiume. Access to the Ægean, on the other hand, was still to seek, and Salonica

was certainly the goal of schemes of Austro-Hungarian expansion. From what is known of the terms of the Triple Alliance it may even be inferred that Salonica was Vienna's price for the sacrifice of her ambitions in the Southern Adriatic.

The Hapsburg ghost walks inasmuch as what Vienna planned yesterday Belgrade must needs plan to-day. The new Jugo-Slav State is land-locked and the valley of the Danube cannot accommodate its trade. But whereas Austria-Hungary commanded the road to the Adriatic but was barred from the Ægean, Jugo-Slavia has access to the Ægean but is obstructed on the Adriatic. The new Triune Kingdom has apparently succeeded in taking over that right to through communication with quays at Salonica which the far-sighted statesmanship of M. Venizelos conceded to Serbia. But the Kingdom has irrevocably lost Trieste, and all the world knows the consequences of its claim to Fiume. To the Italian mind Fiume is at once the frontier port of Italy and the pledge of her mastery over her own sea. This latter aspect of the Italian claim is of the utmost importance. So long as Italian unity was incomplete the country's foreign policy was directed towards hastening its completion, and pursued no definite external aim. But now that her domestic aspirations are realised, Italy has lost no time in developing a foreign

policy in the strict sense of the words. Its aim and substance is control of the Adriatic, and under the impulse of this idea Italy views Jugo-slav ambitions with an angry intolerance which she never cherished towards the Dalmatian projects of Austria. Ever since the outbreak of the second Balkan War, the area involved in the Eastern question has been extending northwards and westwards. It must now be held to include the whole of the eastern coast line of the Adriatic from the Istrian peninsula to the Straits of Otranto. This territorial extension of the area of dispute is one of the most alarming legacies of the war.

The Romanoff ghost has gibbered most loudly, but its cries have carried no meaning to Western ears. Maybe that they are truly meaningless, and that Russia has ceased to be a European State. The processes of the Soviet power are mysterious, and its future is uncertain. But the new régime is even more nakedly autocratic than the old, and autocracy is in its essence Oriental. From this point of view the Soviet power is following the law of its being in devoting its chief activities to the middle East, and its support of Turkish aspirations is to be attributed partly to a desire to behave unpleasantly to Western Europe, partly to a real sympathy with Turkey as its fellow-Asiatic power. On this hypothesis the old Russian

claim to Constantinople must be regarded as altogether withdrawn. In seeking to establish themselves on the shores of the Bosphorus, the Tsars aimed at strengthening their authority in Eastern Europe at the expense of their authority in Western Asia. Their political intention was made clear by the religious terms in which it was stated. It was as Christian Emperors that the Romanoffs proposed to enter Constantinople, and with their entry St. Sophia would be lost to the Crescent and regained for the Cross. According to Soviet doctrine, however, this rivalry between monotheistic faiths should be banished to some political lumber room. Its own sympathies, so far as facts force it to reveal them, incline, indeed, to the Crescent as against the Cross, but that is only because Christianity has been tainted by the supreme evil of capitalism. Such, in summary, is Moscow's attitude, and in so far as this attitude is maintained Moscow is unconcerned with the aspects of the Eastern question which present themselves most prominently to Western minds.

On the other hand, the enigma of present day Russia may equally be resolved in the contrary sense. It is a truism of history that internal revolutions do not affect a country's foreign policy, which is imposed upon it by such permanent circumstances as its geographical position and the

temper of its people; but only modify the language in which it is expressed. In words, then, the Soviet power has recognised the sovereign freedom of Turkey, and has bound itself by treaty to support the Turkish National Government in its endeavours to obtain similar recognition from other States. In fact, however, the Commissar at Angora has won for Russia such a prestige and authority in Turkey as Stratford Canning could not secure for England in the Crimean period, nor Marschall von Bieberstein for Germany in more recent days. For more than a century the Turk has been unable to stand alone; to-day, when he is weaker and his enemies stronger than ever, he could not make front against them but for material and diplomatic support from without. For this support his thanks are due partly to France and partly to Russia. Angora has been the scene of acute though silent rivalry between Bolshevism and the bourgeois constitutionalism which it especially challenges. The battle has been nominally drawn, but the victory of Soviet impulses is in reality sweeping enough. The new Turkish State wears the constitutional dress of Western Europe but Russia dominates its policy. Nor could it be otherwise, for France, her freedom of action hampered by her alliance with Britain, and by the need of considering the interests of her bond-holders,

could only offer negative guarantees, whereas Russia could promise positive support; and in the perpetual intrigues which must result from the state of chronic unsettlement in which the Eastern question has been left, the Turk is a puppet whose strings can be worked from Moscow, if Moscow so will.

A circumstance of some significance suggests that Moscow is itself balancing the new against the old, the Middle East against the Near East. Its claim to have a voice, and even a preponderant voice, in an international settlement affecting the exit from the Black Sea was quite in accord with Tsarist tradition. But this claim was not put forward in the name of an united Russia. The Soviet Power spoke not only for itself but for its satellite States of Georgia, Armenia, and the Ukraine. The two former are negligible, both in themselves and because Russia as an entity does not extend beyond the Caucasus. But the creation of a distinct, though shadowy, administration in the Ukraine is a different matter. It suggests that the Asiatic tendencies of the new Government of Northern Russia may cause the separation of the semi-Europeanised South as they have already separated the more completely Europeanised Western provinces. A survey of Near Eastern prospects must, therefore, give attentive heed to certain indications of a new possibility—the emergence of

an independent South Russian State whose whole life would depend on its oversea communications. Even before the war there were signs of growth of Little Russian feeling, and propagandists were seeking to familiarise Western Europe with the idea of an Ukranian State which, in obliteration of existing frontiers, would incorporate part of the then Austrian province of Galicia. A further step was taken in the early stages of the Russian Revolution when an Ukranian Government was set up, with Kieff as its capital. The new State was at first treated seriously, but soon failed to maintain itself against the encompassing dangers. Harassed from without by the jealous dislike of Poland and Rumania, and distracted within by disputes between Cossack and Little Russian, the new Government was in no condition to withstand the attacks of the aggressive Soviet power in the north. The presence of foreign warships in the ports postponed for awhile the inevitable collapse, but when Odessa was evacuated Bolshevism appeared to have fastened itself upon the whole country drained by the great rivers debouching into the Black Sea. The appearance was deceptive. The retreat of Bolshevism from the Black Sea region was as rapid as its advance, and no true political significance can attach to its equally rapid re-establishment, made possible, as it was, only

by the bankruptcy of Denikin's statesmanship. In Great Russia the Soviet system has evidently secured a real hold on the minds of the townspeople, and perhaps of the peasantry. In Little Russia it seems still to be sullenly resented as an invading tyranny. The frontier continues to fluctuate over some hundreds of miles, but it is reasonable to conclude that the real impulse of the Soviet system is exhausted somewhere north of Kieff. It is hardly likely, even in Russia, that circumstances will ever again be so favourable to the spiritual triumph of the Soviet power in the lower reaches of the Don, Dnieper, and the Volga as they were in 1918-19; and the present arrangement—a federal union based on terrorism—is a stopgap too frail to bear any strain. The most plausible forecast would, therefore, seem to be that the cleavage which has asserted itself in these years of revolution big with fate for the future of Slavdom, will become permanent, and that, Poland helping, Little Russia will break away and form a national entity. The country contains immense mineral wealth and vast stretches of the most fertile soil in the world. Given orderly government, a generation would see it developed into a great power thriving on an enormous export trade. Such a power, which might easily come to dominate the other States of the Black Sea litoral, would, of course, manifest

an absorbing interest in the possession of Constantinople and the guardianship of the Dardanelles. No arrangement which precariously associates a sovereign Turkey with a sovereign League of Nations could check the ambitions of a renascent Southern Russia yearning to secure at one stroke her own economic freedom and the heritage of Empire in the Near East. These are, no doubt, visionary conjectures to which practical statesmanship can hardly give heed. But a statesmanship whose own failures had not forced it to negotiate a shortsighted compromise would have noted that Hapsburg policy had survived the Hapsburgs and would at least have asked whether Romanoff policy would not equally survive the Romanoffs.

The Treaty of Sevres is only negatively responsible for the appearance of the ghosts of these European elements in the Eastern question. They have begun to walk because for a whole year there was no settlement to weigh down their coffin-lids. But the ghost of the conquering Turk is a positive creation, evoked not by the mere lapse of time but by the actual provisions of the abortive treaty. Its terms have been hushed up now; but they deserve consideration because of their peculiar character. They were inspired partly by the facts of the situation as revealed a year or more after

the armistice, partly by agreements made during the war and in the earlier phases of the peace conference. In so far as the treaty was based on facts it became operative, but in so far as it sought to give effect to a division of the bear's skin made before the bear was caught, it was never more than a scrap of paper. It must be viewed as a whole in that it represents the only complete solution of the Eastern question ever put forward by the united authority of the Western Powers; but it must also be broken up into parts so that the real may be clearly separated from the unreal.

The general intention of the treaty was to expel the Turk from Europe and to resolve his dominion in Asia and Africa into its constituent national parts. Circumstances forbade, indeed, any thoroughgoing attempt to straighten out the racial tangle in the Caucasus, but the rest of the Ottoman Empire was parcelled out into four areas. Moslem Anatolia was to remain Turkish, but beyond it an independent Armenia was to curve round south-westwards towards the new Greek province of the Ionian litoral. On the north this new Greek thrust into Asia Minor was to be linked up with Greece proper by the cession of both Turkish and Bulgarian Thrace; while on the south it was to be cushioned by areas under Italian and French

control. Adjacent to this system of States and semi-States there was projected a new Arab Empire. The effect of this treatment was to divide the whole peninsula of Asia Minor in two along a line of cleavage roughly coincident with the course of the Baghdad railway.[1] Territory south of the railway was to remain both Moslem and united, with the difference that the Arab would replace the Turk. But this difference necessarily broke Southern Asia Minor off from its associations with Constantinople and Europe, and linked it instead with Mecca and Africa; and this change of attachment was emphasised by the promotion of the parent Arab State to the dignity of an independent Kingdom. North of the line on the other hand, diversity of religion and race received full political recognition. There were to be three States in place of one, and, what was even more significant, the link with Europe was to be not the Turk but the Greek.

The logic of the whole scheme, which the future may yet recognise to have been well inspired, was marred by two qualifications. In the Southern area a fragment was chipped away from the Arab Empire. From time immemorial the high-road from Egypt to Syria has run through the tract of

[1] The frontier is ethnically sound. The Taurus range parts Turk and Arab to-day as it parted Hittite and Semite in ancient times.

land between the sea and the Jordan;[1] yet in the very moment when Asia Minor was re-linked with Africa the line of communications was interrupted in order that the strip through which it passed might become the national home of the Jewish people. The procedure illustrates the danger of respect for historical tradition in the East. Where is it to stop? Over the bulk of Southern Asia Minor the Turk has again made way for the Arab whom he displaced; but in Palestine the Arab himself must yield to the Jew, though the dispersion of the Jews from Palestine had been in progress for centuries before the Arab left his native deserts.

A parallel concession was made in the northern scheme. With the loss of the coast-line Turkey should logically have ceased to be a power in intimate contact with the West. But under the curious régime planned for Constantinople the Sultan was to be allowed to maintain his royal state there on sufferance. The proposal is significant mainly for the part it played in stimulating the revival of Turkish national feeling.

On the top of all these political arrangements

[1] It is not an accident that the first pitched battle of which we have an adequate tactical record was fought on Palestinian soil. Early in the fifteenth century B.C., Thothmes III., the founder of the Egyptian Empire, routed at Megiddo the Princes gathered to bar his progress, and by his victory won all Syria as far as the Taurus. In our own day Allenby, advancing like the Pharaoh from the Nile valley, struck his blow over the same ground with the same result.

was imposed the mandatory system as a means of harmonising the interests of Western Powers with the national aspirations of the inhabitants. It was intended to apply to all parts of Asia Minor, though with differences in detail. In Armenia, and perhaps in parts of the diminished Turkey proper, the United States was to be given as free a hand as she could be induced to take. On the other hand in the Adalia region Italy was to enjoy economic advantages only; while over the bulk of the Arab area French and British mandates were to operate equally within their respective spheres with a view to the establishment of a balance of power. The whole scheme betrays a confusion of thought in the application of the mandatory system to the Near East and has resulted in an improper and misleading extension of the original mandatory idea. As first devised the system expressed a sense of duty on the part of civilisation towards primitive races. It was desired to prohibit their economic exploitation, and this was to be effected by giving their governors a status hitherto unknown to international law. They were to be trustees, not masters; were to be invested with a mandate, for the exercise of which they were to be responsible to the League of Nations. The peoples of the Near East are by no means primitive, and in strictness the mandatory

system could not be applied to them at all, but the conception of trusteeship caused it to be made to cover the special case of Palestine. The Power which undertook to supervise the resettlement of Jews in their national home would discharge a task affecting every civilised country. Such a Power might fitly be considered as a trustee responsible to the League of Nations. Its position could thus conveniently be made plain by the formal grant of a mandate; but a change in the word's meaning was nevertheless involved, for no one would maintain that the Jews were unable to safeguard their own economic interests.

A further extension of meaning was given when it was proposed that the United States should accept a mandate for Armenia. Like the Jew, the Armenian is economically self-sufficient, but in other matters he stands in need of far more support from the mandatory power. He requires to be defended against his hereditary enemy the Turk, and he cannot hope to raise among his co-religionists enormous sums for the development of his State. Had the scheme matured, Armenia could have been described as an American Protectorate except in one respect. The idea of trusteeship would have been maintained, and whereas a protectorate is normally declared in the interests of the protecting power, the United States was invited to

act precisely because she was disinterested. This was indeed the ground of her refusal; her position differed from that of other mandatory powers in that her interests would not suffer were the trusteeship vested elsewhere. In Southern Asia Minor, on the other hand, these conditions were reversed. Feeling themselves impelled to assert their respective interests in Syria and Iraq, France and Britain sought at once to diminish their rivalry and to dignify their status by claiming the mandatory title. In name, therefore, these two areas were French and British mandatory States; in fact they were French and British Protectorates.

So far as Southern Asia Minor was concerned, then, the provisions of the Treaty did not contradict realities. But its language blurred their significance, and this was a sufficiently serious flaw in an instrument intended to determine permanently the future of half of the Turkish Empire. In regard to the other half, however, it was not merely the terminology of the Treaty which was at fault. Its whole principle was vicious. It assumed that the long controversy between Christian and Moslem had ended with an overwhelming Christian victory, and on this assumption reduced Turkey to a fettered existence between a Christian Greece and a Christian Armenia. A settlement on such lines as these was among the legitimate hopes of 1915.

The Dardanelles expedition was launched in the belief that the Turkish power, already shaken by Russian victories in Armenia, could be finally destroyed by a British stroke at Constantinople; and so fully did the war in the East assume the character of a crusade that it was agreed to establish Russian sovereignty on both sides of the Straits. The event belied all these aspirations. The new crusaders failed of their aim, and at the end of the war the Turk still maintained his grip of his Christian provinces in the north. But his fellow-Moslems in the south had thrown off his authority, and it was from the instigators of their successful rebellion that he requested terms of peace. With Russia non-existent as a Christian power, and with Turkey's Moslem pride unwounded, the circumstances were thus singularly favourable to a settlement which would avoid the religious issue. The opportunity was not merely missed but perverted, and the stages by which the old hatreds were roused to almost unprecedented frenzy form one of the most pitiful chapters in the history of the Eastern question.

The trouble started in the Caucasus, where local feeling, stimulated by the almost simultaneous collapse of Russian and of Turkish authority, bubbled up in a series of explosive self-assertions, each of which styled itself a republic. In the first

excited moments of independence these incoherent States were restrained from flying at their neighbours' throats by respect for the victorious allies as represented by a subaltern in his teens and the still undemobilised remnant of his platoon; and if the wars thus half suppressed had been merely the quarrels of cattle-raiders and woman-hunters, the strong hand of a mandatory power might have mastered the situation without more ado. But at bottom the rivalry was serious. Conceal themselves though they might under territorial nomenclatures, Christian and Moslem were again at variance.

A decision in Paris poured oil on the spreading fire. In the spring of 1919 Italy withdrew from the Peace Conference. All the world, especially all the Near Eastern world, knew the reason for her action. The Allied and Associated Powers had resisted her claim to Fiume. At the moment Fiume stood for the Eastern question, which was thus again rendered insoluble because of disagreements between the Western Powers; and the Turk, realising that the victorious allies of yesterday had become *les grandes impuissances* whom he knew so well, at once took heart of grace. The man of genius who represented Hellenism in Paris struck at the root of this disturbing situation. His vision beheld a Hellas which should inherit Russia's old

ambitions, and so far did he prevail that the Treaty of Sevres eventually gave his country both Thrace and Ionia, thus placing Constantinople almost in its grasp. But in April 1919 even M. Venizelos can scarcely have hoped for so much. At any rate he contented himself with urging the Greek claim to Ionia. Having satisfied the "Big Three" of its strength, he submitted with truth and point that a transfer of territory would be rendered difficult if Turkish feeling were given time to reassert itself further. It was in Smyrna, with its mixed population, that trouble would brew; it was to Smyrna, therefore, that M. Venizelos asked for authority to despatch the troops which would guarantee a tranquil annexation. Paris has been blamed overmuch for acceding to this request. With Serbia and Roumania vastly enlarged Greece could not acquiesce in her old frontiers, and rejection of her claim to expand at Turkey's expense would have opened the way to a new Greco-Turkish war. Where Paris was at fault was that, having thus made a vigorous beginning of the Near Eastern settlement, it did not persevere with its work. But the negotiations with Germany demanded all its attention, which, once diverted, was not bestowed again until too late. When the Turkish treaty was at last complete, the local situation had changed disastrously for the worse.

First, Turkish feeling had found its rallying point, and Angora, strong in the backing of Islamic sentiment, was prepared to defy the orders imposed on Constantinople. Secondly, the direction of Greek policy had passed into the hands of a sovereign who had been baptised with the significant name of Constantine, and who still more significantly styled himself the twelfth of that name. M. Venizelos had planned to make Smyrna the centre from which to execute his policy of Hellenic consolidation; his successor made it his base in a war of Christian aggression. In thus transforming Greek policy King Constantine was faithful to the traditions of his name, and his declaration of war on Angora revealed to observant eyes the full anti-Moslem quality of the Treaty of Sevres. Indian feeling was at once aroused, but British opinion remained obtuse for nearly two years more, when the sudden apprehension of the truth brought about the fall of the Government. Meanwhile King Constantine profited by the absence of Russia to fill the stage with his strange interlude, part melodrama, part harlequinade. His final caper was a claim to occupy Constantinople. The claim was so fantastic—for the city was then held by Allied troops—that its ultimate significance was not perceived. It should be remembered, however, that not only are Near Eastern wars

religious wars, but the gauge of victory is conspicuous for all to see. When the Turks turned St. Sophia from a church into a mosque they issued a challenge, still reiterated morning and evening when the muezzin calls the faithful to prayer from the minarets Islam has added to the former sanctuary of Eastern Christendom. Hence it is that the fanaticism which moves men to put everything to the hazard for their faith is specially concerned with the destinies of that historic pile which was the last ambiguous gift of ancient culture to the modern world. Even in these restless days when the tendency is strong to look for spiritual guidance outside the traditional limits, the old cry has not altogether failed of the old response alike in the Near East and in England and America. The response is, indeed, faint enough as yet; but it is not impossible that it will gather volume.

Be this as it may, the war has certainly postponed the final solution of the Eastern question. Turkey's position in Europe, which was so gravely shaken by the annexation of Bosnia and the first Balkan war, is now steadier than it has ever been since Abdul Hamid's time. It is steadier, not only because Turkey has reminded Europe of her military strength, but because she is at last mistress in her own house. Throughout the nineteenth century every crisis in the Eastern question was

the result of a rebellion of Christian peoples living under Moslem sovereignty, and the presence of Christian elements in Thrace and Asia Minor led to the prophecy that the Turk would one day be driven back into Africa, whence he had come. Now, however, Turkey has been freed from this constant cause of embroilment with Western Europe. The Armenians were wellnigh wiped out during the war, the Greeks have largely followed their retreating armies, and the Great Powers have reluctantly endorsed and completed the process by assenting to an exchange of populations under treaty. It is thus as a relatively compact Moslem State that Turkey now confronts the Western world from her outpost at Adrianople. A clear religious frontier has been drawn along a line which has no geographical sanction. The arrangement is unstable in itself, and a host of bitter memories heighten its instability.

The partition of the Arab world also gives cause for misgiving. In the hour of successful revolt the Arab leaders dreamt of the revival of their old Empire. They now see that Empire lopped of Palestine and broken up into three States—a French protectorate of Syria, directly governed by French administrators, a British protectorate of Iraq governed by an Arab dynasty with British advisers, and an independent Kingdom of the

Hedjaz, whose sovereign is already finding it difficult to secure respect for his authority south of Mecca. These lines of division were arrived at in settlement of controversies between France and Britain which it would be impolitic to reopen now that an Arab chieftain who was expelled from Damascus as a firebrand has been installed in Baghdad as a King. Moreover, under the mandatory system, they must be held to have received the authoritative sanction of the League of Nations. They are thus rigid enough, yet all the circumstances—the dramatic swiftness of the Arab *risorgimento*, the difficult adjustment of French, British, and Jewish interests—proclaimed that ample play should have been left for change.

The same moral was pointed by the recent history of the Eastern question in Europe and Asia alike. In the Europe of close on a century ago, when the Greek revolt first began to convince reluctant statesmen that the Treaty of Vienna had not produced a final map of the continent, the Christian subjects of the Porte were collectively dubbed Greeks, and the truth that European Turkey would eventually break up into a medley of nations of which one would be Greek, one Latin, and the rest Slav, was perhaps fortunately unrevealed to a generation stirred by Byronic enthusiasms. The corresponding impulses to self-assertion

among the peoples of Asia Minor have been hidden behind the veil of the Hamidian despotism. It is, however, noteworthy that the Kurds received from Abdul Hamid something which in a better governed State would have been called autonomy. They furnished him with a special irregular cavalry which did his dirty work on the understanding that he left its recruiting ground alone; and the turbulence of this people since the armistice may be interpreted as their protest against a settlement which has ignored their old privileged status. Equally noteworthy is the determination with which Angora has pressed its claim to Mosul, the possession of which involves control of Kurdistan. The mere assertion of the claim is a challenge to the new State of Iraq, for if the dwellers in the Mesopotamian plain are not masters of the hillmen to the north, the hillmen will most certainly make their bid for dominion over the plain. In fact, to place Kurdistan under the more or less nominal authority of Angora would be to set up a new Assyria whose fighting men would perpetually menace the Arab State which has replaced ancient Babylonia. The Kurds themselves are doubtless ignorant of the historical parallel; but they are evidently well aware that a change in the frontier line which freed them from British surveillance would ensure them rich chances of pillaging the

lowlands to which irrigation and orderly government are beginning to restore their old wealth.

Kurdish unrest, however, is but a symptom of the general change of feeling in progress as a consequence of the shipwreck of Turkish policy in Asia. It aimed at asserting the unity of Islam as a check to the stirrings of incipient nationalism. It is true that Abdul Hamid never ceased to be a military despot; indeed his fall was due to the revolt of his picked troops. But it is also true that he was at pains to represent himself as a spiritual prince, so that it is but a slight exaggeration to say that at the beginning of his reign he was Caliph because he was Sultan, and at the end of it Sultan because he was Caliph. At any rate the Government which deposed him inherited and developed his claims to a spiritual authority over all Moslems, and perhaps made them the basis of its opposition to a British protectorate over Koweit. The result has been an astounding blend of success and failure. The new reign opened with a series of disasters. First Bosnia was lost, then Tripoli, then Macedonia. Yet in 1914 this tatterdemalion sovereign, utterly bankrupt of the military prestige on which his throne was traditionally based, almost succeeded in proclaiming a jehad; and did actually succeed in defending his capital against the most imperial expedition that sea-power ever

launched. There followed the supreme paradox. The appeal to Islamic feeling has left the Turk triumphant in the field of his proudest conquests, yet at the same time has shattered the political unity of Islam. Truly the processes of Eastern thought are impenetrable to Western minds.

The statesmen of Paris, however, chose to take no account of these bewildering phenomena. Without more ado they laid it down that the Moslems of the Near East should no longer own allegiance to one sovereign of mixed spiritual and temporal authority, but should be separated into two national entities, each under carefully distributed tutelage. Events in Egypt have already shown that Islam has been more deeply riven politically and more profoundly stirred religiously than was suspected by the authors of the Treaty of Sevres; and there is now in progress a remarkable semi-nationalist semi-Moslem movement[1] which, if it spreads, as it shows signs of spreading, from the shores of the Mediterranean to the mountains of Central Asia, may yet confront the Western world with half a dozen States, Western in outward organisation, but Eastern in inward sentiment.

[1] The Lausanne discussions gave some striking indications of its quality. For example, the old Turks approved of the Capitulations, being themselves interested in no law except sacred law; whereas the new Turks are resentful even of foreign advisers as incompatible with a sovereign Turkish judicature. Again, the old Turks treated non-Moslems with contemptuous indifference, while the new Turks bid them choose between assimilation and expulsion.

To make it certain that developments should baffle the shrewdest and most far-sighted calculations one further step was necessary—the introduction of a new and incalculable complication from without. That step has been taken. To Western civilisation the Jew is only one degree less inexplicable and indefinable than the Moslem. A mysterious unity pervades Jewry. To call this unity religious is to explain nothing, for Western minds, as the war has shown, are in no way united by the tie of a common faith. Nor is Jewish unity racial, for races cohere and the Jewish race is more widely scattered than any known to history. It is certainly not a political unity, for politics imply some sort of a State, and the last remnants of the Jewish State were destroyed by Titus, the representative of a people whose long-enduring power was based on their excellence in this kind of destruction. The nature of Jewish unity thus baffles Western analysis and misleads it into the intolerant dogmatism of Mr. Hilaire Belloc and less reputable writers of the same kidney. But this much at least may be said of Judaism, that if it has flourished in an environment almost inconceivably adverse, it will not lose its force in an environment made deliberately favourable. Jewish unity is in some sort a national unity. It is now given a truly national field of action. Into the

dim Oriental world in which all sorts of nationalist feelings are beginning to make uncertain stir, the wisdom of Western civilisation has decided to introduce the most persistent type of nationalist sentiment that has yet manifested itself on our planet. What will come of this hodge-podge of intractable elements no man can say and prudent men will not attempt to guess; but it can hardly be doubted that the rise of a Jewish Palestine will give a stimulus to every latent political energy in Asia Minor.

Equally discomforting reflections are suggested by the historical parallel with Europe. In Europe Turkish sovereignty passed away without leaving any mark. The Turk was powerful enough to hold various races under a common domination, but his rule inaugurated a long period of stagnant acquiescence whose end left racial antagonisms as keen as its beginning had found them. It is recorded somewhere of Queen Elizabeth that she once asked the Speaker what had passed in the Lower House since his last audience. "May it please your Grace," replied the practically-minded official, "exactly six weeks." During the Turkish rule in the Balkans there passed exactly six centuries —and nothing more. An analogy is always a dangerous tandem to drive, but present evidence points to a repetition of Balkan history in Asia

Minor. There was an Arab Empire centring about Baghdad before the Turks came, and so soon as the Turks go the Arab Empire reasserts itself over the bulk of its former territory. The old Baghdad Caliphate was not a tranquillising and pacific authority. It was stirred by aggressive impulses which quivered over the whole breadth of Northern Africa, leapt across the straits of Gibraltar, and finally broke against the barrier of the Pyrenees in one of those struggles which has become a point of junction between history and romance. Similarly there are signs that the new Arab movement will not confine itself within the apparently ample limits assigned to it. Egypt is perturbed, Italian authority in Tripoli is of the vaguest, and in Northern Morocco Spain is further from completing her work of pacification than she was ten years ago. Everywhere the gloom deepens as the prospect widens.

What method, then, can we now apply to the embarrassing issues which the Treaty of Sevres left unresolved? These Gordian knots which congresses cannot untie and wars cannot cut—the relations of Christian and Moslem in Thrace, of Italian and Slav on the Adriatic, of mandatory powers in a disturbed and changeful Asia Minor —how shall all the tangles be finally straightened out? Assuredly the one hope of civilisation in

its difficulties lies in the new instrument which it has devised to express its will. The concert of Europe failed because its members were not sufficiently impartial but were all more or less concerned to prosecute their individual policies. The League of Nations may succeed because in its Assembly, and even in its Council, impartial opinion will find voice and will carry a moral weight proportionate to its disinterestedness. But disinterestedness can be carried too far. The views of a Belgium and a Bolivia, a Switzerland and a Siam, depend for their effect on their own inherent reasonableness; there can be no threat of force behind them. It is, however, otherwise with the views of the United States. All the might of that great country is implicit in the proposals she may put forward, as her publicists are sometimes not over-tactful in hinting. On the other hand, the time has gone by when any suggestion of dictation on the part of the United States can be tolerable to European pride. America's refusal to ratify the treaty which her President had helped to negotiate, and her subsequent attitude of complacent and superior aloofness were both mortifying to the peoples of the old world, conscious as they were not only of their sacrifices and achievements in the war, but of glorious traditions going back far beyond the

origins of the Columbus family; and though this bitterness is now past, it has left a legacy of mistrust which threatens to prejudice the authority of the League of Nations in regulating developments of the Eastern question. The three remaining European Great Powers find their individual interests deeply involved, Italy in virtue of her sovereignty of the Adriatic, France and Britain because of their position as mandatory powers in Asia Minor. All three would welcome the co-operation of the United States as a colleague bearing the share of responsibilities and acknowledging that her own individual interests were equally at issue; but not one would now endure American intervention *de haut en bas*. Britain, perhaps, least of all; for her intercourse with her Dominions overseas has at last taught her that equality is the only basis of argument between nations. It was long otherwise in her intercourse with her neighbours in Europe. Again and again has Britain claimed a special hearing in some European dispute because of her own remoteness from it; and again and again have the disputants agreed in resenting intervention which, since interested motives were disavowed, was assumed to be inspired by hypocrisy. *La perfide Albion* was the cry once, but British prestige in Europe rose to its zenith when Britain put out her last

ounce of strength in a war which she frankly admitted was a matter of life and death for her. The war will indeed have been fought in vain if for *la perfide Albion* it has but substituted *la perfide Amèrique*.

But the war will also have been fought in vain if the Eastern question, which so largely provoked it, is left unsolved and insoluble; and the League of Nations offers the only instrument of solution. The logic is strict. When European authority has failed only world authority can succeed, and there is no possible organ of world authority save the League. The League, however, has already indicated that the task lies beyond its present strength. Enthusiasts bade it fix its seat at Constantinople. With a grand gesture it was to invite East and West to resolve their quarrel into a higher unity comprehending both. But more prudent counsels prevailed. Enthroned in Constantinople, the League would instantly have found itself caught in the toils of the Eastern question. It adjudged the risk too great and preferred a more commonplace settlement on the neutral soil of Switzerland. Its decision was no grand refusal made from cowardice. In the moment of its formation the League was gravely stricken. It was constituted as a voluntary Assembly of sovereign nations with a Council on which

permanent seats were given to those States whose material strength gave them rank as Great Powers; and of these permanent seats three were vacant. The authors of the Covenant had allowed for the temporary absence of Germany and Russia; but they had built upon the presence of the United States. Her defection destroyed the balance of the whole scheme. The small Powers would not join a League whose members did not meet as equals; the Great Powers could not join a League which did not recognise their special position; and the scheme of Assembly and Council was devised to reconcile these contradictory attitudes. With the abstention of the United States this compromise was toppled over. For the United States held a position apart even among the Great Powers. Alone of them she had emerged from the war with her strength practically unimpaired. Her repudiation of membership thus meant that matters of interest to the whole world would require to be regulated by agreement between two authorities both equally sovereign—the League on the one hand and the United States on the other. There could be no more flagrant defiance of that principle of equality on which the League was founded.

Presumably it was in apprehension of such a state of affairs that the authors of the Treaty of Sevres sought to force a mandate for Armenia on

the United States, though they must have been aware of the hostile trend of American opinion. The Eastern question, we may suppose them to have argued, can only be dealt with by the authority of civilisation working through the League of Nations; but so delicately is the League constructed that it cannot function unless there is real equality between the Great Powers privileged to sit permanently on its council; and this condition will be unfulfilled if the greatest of them all can approach so critical an issue with complete detachment. Therefore the United States must involve herself by accepting a mandate for Armenia or the League is wrecked.

Thanks to the new Turkish nationalism this argument has lost its force for the time being; but it will reassert itself in all its bold, uncontrovertible logic, when the Eastern question again enters on a threatening phase. To the average American it may at first appear outrageous that because he allowed his traditional foreign policy to be intermitted by the war he must now abandon it for ever. Yet the fact that, in spite of her long and obstinate effort to maintain neutrality, the United States was at last inevitably drawn into the war has shown once and for all that she cannot be indifferent to a disturbance of the world's peace, and there is no room for doubt as to where the

world's next crisis will arise. It will arise in the Eastern Mediterranean. All Europe knows it, and knows its own past history and present feelings too well for its opinion to be in error. Let not America plead that the Eastern Mediterranean is no concern of hers. The Eastern Mediterranean is the common concern of civilisation. Out of it civilised society was born, and round its coasts civilised society must now prove its power to control the disruptive tendencies which threaten its continued existence. Shall the old world advance from order through order to a higher order? Or shall it starve amid the desolation its own quarrels have caused? To such questions there can be but one answer. But the new world must give it, and it can only give it by consenting to be called in, permanently and irrevocably, to redress the balance of the old.

CHAPTER VI

THE WESTERN QUESTION; ITS CHARACTER AND HISTORY

Popular and learned speech alike know nothing of the term Western Question. Nevertheless, there is a Western question, and it, too, is of respectable antiquity. It may claim, indeed, to be even older than the Eastern question. For though the Eastern question in its wider aspect dates back to the beginnings of recorded time in Europe, the term is generally applied to the consequence of the Turkish invasion in the fourteenth century. By that date the Western question was already venerable, for it may be said to have been created by the Emperor Augustus. Even in his day it had already passed through several phases. The Gauls had once entered Italy and sacked Rome, and Hannibal had afterwards followed in their steps. From the time of the Second Punic War the Romans had held that an invader must be met as he debouched from the mountains, until Marius had transformed the situation by proving that Italy's true line of defence lay on the further side of her Alpine frontier. Augustus found that

even this bolder conception had become antiquated. The expansionist politicians of his age held that the forward movement so brilliantly begun by Julius Cæsar when, on the principle that conquest is the best defence, he disdained the frontier of the maritime Alps, pushed northwards, and in ten wonderful years carried Roman authority to the Atlantic and the Channel, required to be rounded off and made perpetually secure by the conquest of Germany and Britain. It was already apparent that the vast territory administered by Rome must some day be given definite limits, and it was agreed that in Europe these limits should be fixed by great rivers. To the East of Italy the Danube, though at many points not yet reached, was clearly the destined frontier. Further west the Rhine had been attained; but it was held in many quarters that the Rhine frontier should be abandoned and the Roman arms pushed on to the Elbe, which would supply a shorter line and one more readily combined with the Danube. To this plan the cautious Augustus gave a hesitating assent. Operations were begun with considerable success, when disaster befell the three legions under Varus. The Emperor at once abandoned the scheme and fell back to the Rhine; nor, though punitive expeditions frequently penetrated into Germany, was the project of annexation ever seriously

renewed. To his successor, Tiberius, Augustus bequeathed the maxim that the Empire must be kept within its frontiers—a counsel which that conservative prince sedulously observed. No later Cæsar having dared transgress the Augustan precept, the whole frontier policy of the Empire was governed by the first Emperor's phrase, with the consequence that to this day the Rhine valley marks a rift in the fabric of European civilisation. The war of 1914 was thus the remote but entirely logical result of this dangerous confusion of policy with epigram. Happily the remaining part of the forward programme—the conquest of Britain—was carried out during the reign of Claudius, with results decisive for the future of the island, and therefore of the world.

Now the importance of Augustus's policy lies in the fact that the situation which he created endured for over 400 years and then faded only gradually out of existence. The Roman Empire vanished so many centuries ago that we moderns fail to realise it as the most abiding administrative organisation that Europe has ever known. The British Empire, whose growth is in the main an event of the nineteenth century, is, in comparison, an organisation of yesterday. Moreover, Roman rule was more than a mere territorial label. It was a civilisation. It was the only European civilisation.

Even nowadays, with the atrocities of *kultur* fresh in our minds, we scarcely think of civilisation as limited by national frontiers, and it certainly would not be claimed that a single State was its custodian. That claim, however, was justly made by Imperial Rome. Everything that we value most in civilised life—art, law, literature, religion —was given to us by Rome. The people within the Roman frontiers led lives comparable with our own; the people beyond them dwelt in the outer darkness of barbarism. And because that state of affairs continued for centuries, there was drawn right across Europe along the trace of the Rhine and Danube valleys a line of cleavage which still cuts deep. Only it has fluctuated. A river is not a natural frontier. In itself it unites rather than severs the peoples who dwell on its banks. Hence there grew up in Roman times a political and cultural no-man's-land, a region of semi-Romanised barbarism, which in some sort still persists. In Roman times the aggressive Latin spirit carried no-man's-land to the north of the Rhenish frontier. In later ages Teutonic counter-aggression reversed the position and in our own day has attempted to delatinise first Alsace-Lorraine and more lately Belgium. But these debated regions have but served to accentuate the rivalry between Latin and Teuton, based as it is on diversity of blood,

intensified during the Roman period by five centuries of most emphatic diversity of culture.

The Roman Empire collapsed at last under the pressure of the Northern tribes. But the invaders did not obliterate the old organisation, but rather diluted it with gradually strengthening doses of barbaric manners. They brought into Western Europe the personal tie which eventually became the central principle of feudalism, but everything else that gave colour and meaning to life they borrowed from the conquered. The first passion for loot once satisfied, they set themselves to acquire elements of culture of which they felt the lack. It would, of course, be ridiculous to compare the standard of learning and refinement in France under the Merovingian kings with the standard under Hadrian. But such learning and refinement as existed was admittedly Latin and, in a sense, the Romanisation of Western Europe continued throughout the middle ages, and in the end paved the way for the rapid progress of the renaissance. Herein lies the clue to a far-reaching and perplexing difference in outlook between mediæval and modern times. The man of to-day looks forward to the future for the realisation of his ideals; the mediæval man, with the tradition of the Roman Empire strong upon him, looked back into the past. When Charlemagne felt that he had given

his world the peace, order, and progress which it had lacked for centuries he quite naturally expressed his view by accepting the title of Roman Emperor. But the title survived the outlook which had inspired its choice. With altered meaning, it was potent for many centuries and its memory works yet [1]; so that it may be bracketed along with certain phrases of theological controversy as illustrating the tremendous, irrational influence occasionally exercised by words upon policy.

Charlemagne himself consciously revived and embodied in his title the policy abandoned by Augustus. His Empire embraced Germany as well as France and Italy, and after the lapse of eight centuries there was again some hope of reconciling the antagonism between Latin and Teuton which created the Western question. In a sense Germany, between the ninth and the thirteenth centuries, was conquered by Rome. But it was a mediæval Rome. The middle ages sought first to assimilate and then to re-express from their own standpoint the mass of classical knowledge inherited through the Christian Fathers, and to this day the Teutonic mind bears the mediæval stamp. It is

[1] Napoleon, by a fate which he must have deplored, had to extinguish a title which he could neither appropriate himself nor suffer to be borne by another; but in our own day it was reported of German troops entraining for the frontiers in August 1914, that they chalked on the railway wagons, "*Heil Dir Wilhelm Kaiser von Europa!*"

formal and systematic; it is unwearied in its patient accumulation of facts; and within its self-imposed limitations it is vigorous and conclusive in its logic. But these qualities are not Latin, however much they may derive from the Latin; and it may be suspected that racial divergence and intellectual development had gone too far for more organic fusion to be possible, even if the genius of the Carolings had not miserably collapsed after it had attained its climax. But at least Charlemagne left behind him a new tradition. He implanted in the hearts of his Teutonic subjects the belief that they, too, were the heirs of Rome, and it was in obedience to this tradition that Teutonic sovereigns took the title of Roman Emperor and strove to justify the paradox by obtaining possession of Italy. The long and dreary struggle between France and the Empire which opened late in the fifteenth century thus takes its intelligible place in the history of the Western question. Italy was the prize whose winner could claim to be the torch-bearer of civilisation. There thus arose among the Teutonic peoples an instinct to struggle down towards light and warmth and good cheer and the traditional seat of sovereignty. This instinct, as will be seen, has acted powerfully in modern Germany, which has assumed the part which Austria had become powerless to play.

It is an instinct which ever since its first assertion in the later days of the Western Empire has been a persistent menace to European stability. To its play must be attributed the failure of the mediæval solution to the problem with which Augustus has burdened civilisation. Not unnaturally, the nascent spirit of nationality found an admirable field for development in the no-man's-land which separated antique culture from antique barbarism. There grew up in the middle ages a great State, based on the Upper Rhine—the kingdom of Burgundy. It was a State which by virtue of its position became a centre of light and progress, and it fills some glorious pages in the history of the renaissance. It was, indeed, one of the cradles both of modern patriotism and of modern learning, and there was no creation of mediæval politics which gave richer promise of development into a nation. The promise was destroyed when the death of Charles the Bold left his kingdom without a head and helpless against the aggressive Teutonic thrust on the one side and the penetrative French influence on the other. To this day Latin and Teuton still dispute over the heritage of Charles the Bold.

Throughout mediæval and early modern times the balance of victory inclined towards the Teuton. The frontiers of Latinism were slightly driven in,

so that they came to be traced by a line drawn from the Channel down the Rhine, across the Alps, and along the Eastern Coast of the Adriatic. At the end of the eighteenth century this line, emphasised by generations of dynastic struggles, appeared to hold prospects of permanence. But Napoleon, an innovator with an historical mind, gave new vitality to the plans of Charlemagne. His spectacular success occupied the thoughts of the reactionaries who made the map of Europe at Vienna. To forestall the surprises of the future they gave the Prussian a bridgehead across the Rhine and made Austria supreme in Italy. The achievement of Italian unity during the next two generations again redressed the balance, and at the outbreak of the great war the Teutonic hold in the Mediterranean had shrunk to the North-Eastern corner of the Adriatic.

Such a position was little to the taste of the new and ambitious German Empire. It had brought itself to birth by a victory over Latinism, and the annexed trans-rhenish provinces were at once a proof of its strength and an earnest of its intentions. The forward move had rendered the secular antagonism between the two peoples more acute than ever, but France had found characteristically Latin compensation in the development of her Mediterranean Empire. In the civilisation of Algeria, the

incorporation of Tunis, and finally in the establishment of a protectorate over Morocco, France might perhaps have found balm for her smart. But the adversary of the Rhine was beforehand with her. In 1905 the then German Emperor visited Tangier, and the German Empire put forward claims to an interest in Morocco. There is no need to detail the successive phases of the Moroccan crisis or to set forth the unsatisfactory character of the compromise which France eventually secured by the sacrifice of a corner of her Central African Empire. Set in its context, the Moroccan quarrel at once assumes immense importance. It shows that the enemy of France in the North had become the enemy in the South also; and that German statesmen were aware of what this implied in fact, is shown by Bethmann-Hollweg's refusal on the eve of war to guarantee to the French colonies the territorial immunity which he graciously extended to France herself.

What it implied in thought was perhaps even more significant. Flushed with his victory on the Rhine the Teuton was prepared to upset the verdict of time, and to renew, in a revised form suited to modern ideas, the old Carolingian claim to the more vital waters of the Mediterranean. There was thus involved in the new colonial policy a challenge to Latinism in its citadel; so that, as

the perspective of events becomes clearer, Morocco will be seen to hold in the development of the Western question the same decisive importance that the Baghdad railway concession, equally a challenge, admittedly holds in the Eastern. Germany, in this view, intervened aggressively in both halves of the Mediterranean basin. In both she was prepared to carve an entrance for herself by the sword. Her two-fold action involved her, and all Western Europe with her, in the Austro-Russian struggle for supremacy over the Southern Slavs. German policy thus sufficiently accounts for the vast extent of the Great War, and helps to explain the exceptional bitterness with which it was waged. But it does not give the key to the view, cherished by all the belligerents, that the war was a life and death struggle. German policy as just set forth imposes its veto on all non-German expansion, but it does not forbid the bare existence of non-German nations. This prohibition follows, however, from an idiosyncrasy of German thought. The conception of a balance of power necessarily involves some definition of the factors to be balanced, and in Western Europe such definition is at once forthcoming. The terms Britain, France, Spain, and Italy stand for geographical entities, and have a meaning independent of the boundary lines traced on the map of the moment. The Latin

countries in particular are conscious of themselves as geographical expressions and speak of their natural frontiers, disregard of which sets up a feeling of irritation dangerous to the peace of Europe. Throughout the war France and Italy were fighting to recover their natural frontiers, and the Germans played on the same feeling in Spain by their references to "the Gibraltar question." But this description of national feeling in precise territorial terms is peculiar to Western Europe. For reasons not only geographical, nationalism in Eastern Europe has never been equally definite. Italy is merely a geographical expression, sneered Metternich; but such was the hold of this geographical expression over Italian minds that in the course of a century it created a political fact. Metternich's own Austria, on the contrary, was a political fact but not a geographical expression; and in general the balance of power was concerned with definite factors in Western Europe but with indefinite agglomerations in the central and eastern parts of the continent. The distinction is vital, but since diplomacy has felt compelled to ignore it, further illustrations may be cited. Turkey lost province after province of her European territory in the two generations before the war, but popular speech felt no difficulty in describing the successive fragments by the old

name. Nor at the present time is any confusion caused by giving the name Austria to a central province stripped of its circumambient Empire, and the old name Russia is still assigned to the revolutionary State whose indeterminate frontiers at least exclude Finland, Poland, and the Baltic provinces, and have excluded Transcaucasia, the Ukraine, and Siberia. On the other hand, were France to be deprived of all territory north of the Loire and east of the Rhone it would take centuries for the world to admit that the remnant remaining was indeed France, in spite of its geographical definiteness.

Frontier policy is accordingly the touchstone of these divergent conceptions of nationality. In the west nations are separated by fairly hard and fast lines. The Pyrenees form the frontier between France and Spain, and the mountain range itself is a no-man's-land which can accommodate the republic of Andorra. The Alps are the frontiers of Italy, and here, too, there is room for a buffer republic. It is even in accord with historical tradition that, on the break up of the Austrian Empire, a movement for union with Switzerland should have manifested itself in the Austrian Alpine provinces, the Tyrol, and Vorarlberg. So, too, the Channel formed the frontier between England and France, and though Calais was under

English rule for only thirteen years short of five centuries, its loss broke no English heart except Queen Mary's.

But in the East, Germany, Austria, Russia, Turkey were all labels for fluctuating and arbitrary expanses of territory. Germany, as the Hohenzollerns made it, included elements which were not and never became German, and Turkey was an inefficient Germany. Both were empires of conquest which came by the sword and have perished by the sword. Austria, too, we knew as a congeries of units held together by the Hapsburg monarch and his bureaucracy. Austria was, in fact, a political polypus which when lopped, for instance, of its Italian limb, thrust out a Bosnian limb in compensation and remained much the same organism as before. Until the Revolution Russia was thought of as possessing a certain degree of real unity, but recent events have shown that Tsarism was only a veneer, and that Russia, like Austria, was an artificial amalgam. The map of Europe in 1912 thus showed frontiers which were in part real, but in greater part accidental. Germany was bounded by Austria and Russia, Austria by Russia and Turkey, Turkey by Russia and Austria, but every frontier was arbitrary and had, in fact, been traced by violence. It is clear that no limit could be set to the natural and legitimate expansion

of such indefinite entities, and it is perhaps because both Austria and Russia were able to expand at Turkey's expense that their growth did not long since endanger the peace of Europe. In this respect Germany may deserve to be commiserated for her unfortunate geographical position. But there is also a fundamental difference in her method of expansion. She has had no conveniently adjacent Turkey to assimilate piecemeal, and her attempt to find a Turkey in Poland has shocked civilisation. Still, on her eastern borders, where no invincible geographical tradition has confronted her, Germany has achieved one of the most notable expansions in European history. She has teutonised the Slav population between the Elbe and the Oder. She has teutonised lower Silesia. Before the war she was on the way to teutonising the Baltic provinces. In Eastern Europe, in fact, conquest can be permanent if it is sufficiently thorough. But in Western Europe no conquest can obliterate the lines of national division traced by geography and accentuated by the Roman Empire. On the Rhine the two conceptions of frontier clash and have clashed for centuries. On the one side is France, determined to gallicise up to her natural frontier; on the other side Germany, knowing nothing of frontiers and equally determined to teutonise up to the utmost limits of her conquering arms. This clash of ideas

constitutes the Western question in its modern form.

A further point of immense political importance follows from these facts. In Eastern Europe conquest can digest its fruits at its leisure. Conquest absorbs a mass of people who stand collectively for nothing in particular. Accordingly Russia, and to some extent Austria, have been tolerantly assimilative. The Lett was permitted to differ from the Georgian, the Great Russian from the Ukrainian, the Czech from the Magyar. It was only when this process of gradual absorption encountered a solid nationalist sentiment against which its assimilative methods were powerless, that persecution became the rule. In Finland and Poland, in Galicia and Bosnia, the statesmen of Russia and Austria saw the development of political movements wholly incompatible with orthodox imperialist policy. Against these movements they mobilised all the terrors of government—in vain. Assimilation is a method which either succeeds gradually or fails at once. Centuries have gone to assimilate England, Wales, and Scotland, but the effort to assimilate Ireland has always broken down catastrophically. The more Britain has striven to benefit Ireland, the more resentment has her action aroused. It could not be otherwise. Incompatible ideas necessarily cause friction when

brought close together. The tragic aspect of Austria's ruin lies in the fact that she has brought it about by creating a series of Irelands. So far as any political agency healed the wounds which the Thirty Years' War inflicted on Germany, that agency was Austria. But when the return of material prosperity enabled German national spirit to reassert itself, it was against Austria that its force was turned. So, too, with Italy. Had Austria set herself to drain the Lombardy plain of its wealth, Italian misery would have left no room for Italian unity. But Austria made her province prosperous, and it broke into revolt. As compensation for her losses, Austria took over two Slav provinces. Her orderly rule replaced Turkish oppression and the liberator of one generation became the tyrant of the next.

Bismarck had an instinct for these things. In Eastern Europe, he felt, where the possibilities of expansion were so numerous, Germany had better avoid anything so intractable as a nation. After Sadowa King William's generals, flushed with victory, demanded the annexation of Bohemia. Bismarck knew that within that diamond-shaped mountain wall there was something which Germany could annex but never assimilate, and has left it on record that the rejection of his views would have driven him to suicide, so intensely were they

cherished. But Germany's western border abutted against nations everywhere. Expansion in the West was impossible without outraging national sentiment, and the Germans therefore decided to outrage it thoroughly. Hence in the West the Germany policy of assimilation was consistently intolerant. This feature of policy, which the Germans regarded as imposed on themselves by the unreasonable demeanour of their defeated neighbours, has modified the whole structure of the German Empire. Granted a certain fundamental Teutonic unity, Germany has been tolerant of local differences within her borders. The German *Reich* remains a federation, though many internal variations were obliterated during the reign of William II., and the new Republic is reluctant to endure those that remain. But it has always been demanded of the various elements that they should conform to the common type. There was room for Saxons and Bavarians in the German Empire, but not for Poles, Danes, and Frenchmen. These recalcitrant units must be Germanised. It follows that Germany cannot simply be bracketed with Austria and Russia as lacking what may be called a geographical sense. She went beyond them in a readiness to do violence to the geographical consciousness of other peoples. Austria and Russia would recognise limits; Germany defied them, and

by her defiance aroused in France an implacable resolve for vengeance. During the war the sum and substance of the whole matter was apprehended by Mr. Lloyd George in a flash of inspired statesmanship. He realised, as everyday minds had also realised, that since Germany would admit no frontiers she must have them imposed on her; he added, and the apparent paradox of the addition is the hallmark of genius, that the stability of Western Europe—the epithet is noteworthy—demanded the establishment of an independent Poland.

CHAPTER VII

THE TWO QUESTIONS LINKED

In the generation during which the historical method was winning its first triumphs, there flourished a school of writers who sought to explain history by subsuming its multitudinous facts under some comprehensive impersonal physical formula based on climate and geography. This school, whose methods still appeal to minds of wide outlook but narrow sympathies, was a bye-product of Darwinism. It was indeed inevitable that, when thought was fascinated by the all-powerful action of the natural laws by which life was then first realised to be conditioned, a mechanical conception of history should have prevailed, and that men in the mass should have been viewed as wholly under the influence of their physical environment. Just because this theory is of yesterday it appears peculiarly out of date now. To our minds the mainsprings of human action are conspicuously ideas bubbling up from within and not facts pressing down from without. The doctrine has conclusive warrant in contemporary experience. We have behind us a war in which millions on

both sides have fallen for aspirations, good and bad, in which one Great Power went to war for the principle enunciated in a scrap of paper and another intervened to make the world safe for democracy. We have before us an Eastern European problem which not all the efforts of a singularly narrow-minded Press has induced the public to envisage in other than ideal terms. Who cares about the frontier lines which may or may not be traced across the great mass of territory which was once Russia? Who attaches decisive importance to the admitted bloodthirstiness either of the Soviet leaders or of their opponents? All the questions of state-organisation and of administrative method which arise out of the Russian situation seem trivial in comparison with the challenge given by the Soviet system to all previous working conceptions of democracy. What matters is whether the idea of Bolshevism, apart from its cruelties and even from its intermittent failures in application, is or is not a solid contribution to the theory of human liberty; and it is remarkable that, in spite of the tragic defection of Russia in the crisis of the war, and in spite of the wretchedness and confusion in which Russia is now plunged, the idea has been steadily gaining sympathy throughout the Western world, so that increasing numbers of human men and women are ready to

negotiate with the crime-stained authors of the great experiment.

Moving as we do within the orbit of such emotions, we heirs of the world-war must needs find it matter of paradox that historians should have seriously disputed whether ideas or facts have more mightily swayed men's minds. Nevertheless, the mechanical point of view has two claims upon contemporary attention, the one historical, the other prophetic. Historically a mechanical formula described as the economic interpretation of history is one of the traditions of Marxian Socialism, and Socialism in one or other of its protean forms is a potent influence in our modern world. But the prime justification for an attempt to study the thrust of the Teuton towards the Mediterranean from a mechanical standpoint lies neither in its bearing on a phase of thought nor in its actual inspiration of countless popular appeals to Latin solidarity made both on the outbreak of war and subsequently on the intervention of Italy. For all its quaint Victorian dress the method leads to a criticism of the statesmanship of Paris so cogent as to make it hard to doubt that the future will adopt it. Such is, of course, the usual fate of instruments of thought. One generation elaborates them and works them to death; the next discards them in the rage of reaction; the third philosophically

rakes the ashes of controversy in the sure hope of finding additional matter for its apparatus of criticism. Moreover, in historical study the doctrine of economy of causes is emphatically reversed, and the strength of a policy is all the more manifest when it is shown to be derivable from distinct and even incompatible causes.

An interpretation of Germany's action in terms of the most formal geography suggests itself with the first glance at a small-scale map of the old world. If the map be turned on its side, the continent of Europe is seen to be a triangular appanage to the greater mass of Asia. The Eastern frontier of European Russia—the name is used for convenience' sake—is the base of the triangle and Gibraltar is its apex. The two sides of the triangle are broken by peninsulas jutting into the surrounding sea—Scandinavia and Denmark on the north, Italy and Greece on the south. All inland peoples strive to gain the sea. Seas do not separate, they unite, said the German Emperor in true phrase, in the days before he had evolved the maritime weapon of warfare which cut his country off from civilisation. Seas unite, and the struggle for access to the sea is the expression of the ultimate social instinct which bids all people attain communion with their kind. But, from the point of view of communion, access to the Baltic and access

to the Mediterranean mean very different things. The Baltic leads nowhere. Gallant English souls adventured their lives for centuries in search of the North-West passage. It exists, but a curtain of snow and ice bars it to humanity. The Baltic is the cheat of the world's seas. Those who are lords of it have dominion only over the polar waste. But the Mediterranean is, indeed, the gateway of the world. If the navigators who sailed beyond the Pillars of Hercules reaped little fruit for their pains until comparatively modern times, those who sought what lay beyond the South-Eastern confines of their sea were most bountifully rewarded. For across the Mediterranean lay the path to the East, the home of wealth, the cradle of civilisation. He who holds the Mediterranean can claim half the world in fee—as Alexander first discovered by the insight of his genius, as the Romans proved after him, and the Venetians after them, and as we British know to-day. If any State aim at world-empire it must base itself on the world's central line of communications—the Mediterranean. All European history is the illustration of this great truth, and the Germans, bringing the weight of their learning to bear on their own bid for world power, indubitably realised it. Therefore it was that they made their great double thrust for control of both exits of the sea whose possession is

sovereignty, and strove at one and the same time for supremacy in Turkey and in Morocco. Dazzled by an alliterative phrase and misled by his desire to pass a false compliment to his then friend the Tsar, the "Admiral of the Atlantic" misnamed his own title. On the Atlantic the ex-Kaiser was a mere passenger skirting the fringe of its waters. It was a claim to the Admiralty of the Midland Sea that he sought to assert in his dramatic visits to Constantinople and Tangier, and in all the schemes of policy that flowed from them.

This double thrust carried with it one tremendous consequence which lifted the resulting war into a category apart from all other wars. It raised both the Eastern and the Western questions simultaneously. Both questions have been created by the pressure of a Northern people Southward. But in the East Slav attacked Turk, and in the West Teuton attacked Latin. Never before our day was there reason for delivering the two sets of attacks in concert, or even at the same time. But in the crisis of 1914 Germany swallowed Austria whole, and thus converted the Dual Alliance into a Teutonic Empire with a Slav fringe. She struck through the fringe in the East; she struck directly in the West; and it was because her arm had delivered both blows that Western opinion refused to treat the consequences of either in isolation,

even when a local decision appeared to have been reached. The much vaunted German war-map of 1917 showed overwhelming victory in the East and a doubtful draw in the West. The question was actually raised of the conclusion of a peace embodying those conditions. In answering it Western opinion showed how sound was the political instinct which had led it to vacillate with disastrous military consequences between Eastern and Western plans of campaign. Germany was told that, having elected to raise both questions together, she must be content to have them solved together. The issues which, in defiance of Bismarckian example, she chose to open simultaneously, were seen to have been forced by her into a whole which could not again be broken up into its original parts. Long separate, they had become indissoluble, because the war was waged against Germany for what she was in herself as expressed by all her activities, and was not a Russian war against Germany in the Near East, and a French war against Germany in the West, and a British war against Germany in Belgium, and an American war against Germany on the seas. It was one war, not four wars which were accidentally fought together. It was one war, and so must be ended by one comprehensive decision. That fact, the inspiration of the Grand Alliance,

tinged the belligerents' outlook on the future. Europe, it was felt, was given such an opportunity for a decisive settlement as she had never before enjoyed. Both the great questions which had been the sources of all her wars were at last linked. Both could, therefore, be disposed of together and in true relation with one another. The conditions were thus such that they could be disposed of for ever. Up to the very moment of the armistice this was the essence of the European case for a fight to a finish as opposed to a peace by negotiation.

All this had apparently been forgotten by the time the Peace Conference assembled in Paris. The sense that the war raised issues of common interest to all civilisation had formed the Grand Alliance and had enabled the Great Powers of Europe, Asia, and America to co-operate with such organic unity of action. It is, therefore, the more remarkable that, when victory had been attained, the issues arising out of the war should have been liquidated piecemeal, so that the treaty with Germany came into force before the treaty with Turkey was even drafted. For this circumstance, however, there is a very simple explanation in the limits of human capacity. Responsibility for shaping the terms of settlement was bound to rest with the chief representatives of the countries primarily interested in their maintenance. There were hundreds of

peace delegates in Paris during the first half of 1919, but all great decisions were taken by four men—the President of the United States, and the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, France, and Italy. Confronted with so appalling a burden of work, in comparison with which, as Mr. Lloyd George has pointed out, the labours of the Congress of Vienna were insignificant, the " Big Four " took the inevitable course of postponing whatever could be postponed. Already it is beginning to appear as though the relative importance of the various issues was misjudged and that the Eastern question was disastrously shelved; but in the early days of 1919 it seemed beyond question that the settlement with Germany must take precedence of everything else. Opinion was still labouring under the shock of the blows dealt by Germany to the world's public law. All prospects of an enduring peace turned on the complete destruction of German militarism. The world could not disarm, could not even demobilise, until it was assured that never again would a Great Power give its best thoughts to plans for war and conduct the war it had planned with a ferocity which disdained all moral restraint. Moreover, the future of Western Europe was bound up with the future of France, and France, with ten devastated departments, demanded guarantees of security before she could commit

herself to the support of any general settlement. M. Clemenceau was not the man to refrain from pressing these considerations on his colleagues. His programme was adopted. The "Big Four" contented themselves with compelling Germany to renounce her whole position in the Near East, and devoted their attention to the military and economic clauses of the German treaty.

Given the concentration of business in four men's hands, no other order of procedure was possible. Not only was the German treaty the most urgent item in the agenda of the conference, but it appeared that the Eastern question was settled so far as it was old, and was not yet ripe for settlement so far as it was new. In the autumn of 1918 the Austro-Hungarian and Turkish Empires fell to pieces, and the fragments at once began to reconstitute themselves according to the principles of nationality. Of Austria-Hungary there remained a German Austria and a Magyar Hungary. The Czecho-Slovaks of Bohemia achieved independence, and the other provinces attached themselves according to their affinities—the Poles of Galicia to Poland, the Italians of the Trentino and Istria to Italy, the Rumanians of Transylvania to Rumania, the Slavs of Bosnia, Herzegovinia, and Dalmatia to Serbia. Turkey's case was similar. The non-Turkish vilayets seemed irretrievably lost. There remained

only the indubitably Turkish Anatolia and the scarcely less indubitably Turkish Thrace. It may have seemed to the members of the conference in the opening weeks of their deliberations that, as regards the territorial settlement of the Eastern Mediterranean area, nothing was required save formal sanction of frontier-lines already drawn. Not till late in the spring did the inherent complexities of the situation begin to be apparent and the completion of the draft treaty with Germany to be delayed by rivalries between Italian and Jugo-Slav, Pole and Czech, Rumanian and Magyar, Greek and Turk. But from the moment that the Syrian controversy began to cloud the blue sky of Anglo-French relations the urgency of the Eastern question was obvious, and its postponement until 1920 is indefensible. The decision is explained but not justified by the pressure of domestic politics on the harassed plenipotentiaries whose stay in Paris had already far exceeded their original expectations. To do the conference justice, however—not altogether an easy matter in the world's present mood of disappointment with its work—an attempt was made to regulate the outstanding new development in Near Eastern affairs. There could be no settlement without Russia, whose voice must needs be decisive in whatever conclusions were reached regarding Turkey's Black Sea provinces,

and without whose approval any regulation of traffic through the Dardanelles was bound to be upset sooner or later. Knowing as it did that Russia had seized the opportunity to denounce in 1870 the maritime convention imposed upon her fourteen years before, the conference, with good sense, but with dangerous optimism, sought to achieve some restoration of Russian unity as a prelude to conversations about Constantinople and the Straits. A meeting of representatives of the contending factions was proposed, but in no quarter was the invitation favourably received. Feeling that the time did not brook further delay over the hopeless confusion of Russian affairs, the conference passed to other business, and by so doing lost its best opportunity of enlisting American co-operation in the settlement of the Eastern Mediterranean world. Had the Eastern question been pushed at once to the front, had its present difficulties and even graver threats to the world's future been at once set out in public session, it may be that the United States, still hot with enthusiasm for her allies, would have accepted a mandate for Armenia. By the autumn of 1920 the chance had definitely passed.

No European can cherish a grievance because America has decided, after some hesitation, to remain clear of Asiatic entanglements; but in

another aspect the influence of American policy has had lamentable consequences which threaten to prejudice the whole future relations between the New World and the Old. As soon as the Paris Conference assembled two currents of opinion became manifest. There were those who concentrated on the reckoning with Germany, and those whose views took wider range because their sufferings had been less great. A longing possessed the peoples of Europe for a brighter and clearer future. All of them were in the mood to make heavy sacrifices if but the menace of a future war were thereby finally removed. Had America been unrepresented at the conference, the attention of its more idealistic members would have been concentrated upon Europe. The secular problems of the continent would have been exhaustively studied; an appreciation of the vital import of the Eastern question would have developed, and the scheme of piecemeal settlement strenuously opposed. But not only was America represented, but her chief delegate was hailed at once as the leader and mouthpiece of European idealism. President Wilson took the widest view of his opportunities. As he saw the position, concentration on European affairs was fatal. What was required was a mechanism for the settlement of all disputed questions, and this new instrument must be world-wide

in its composition as well as in its scope. President Wilson came to the conference resolute to form a League of Nations, and all the hopes of war-worn Europe centred about him. Paris, London, Rome hailed him as the deliverer. But he had no scheme of deliverance. Gradually an astonished world learnt that he had come to Europe without a plan. He had not even familiarised his own people with his ideas. The conference was forced by the President's enthusiasm to devote itself at once to the consideration of a scheme that could only be carried into being by men who had worked well together and had come to trust one another. The scheme was drafted, nevertheless; was hastily amended in deference to the rising volume of American opposition; and even in its modified form was found to be wholly unacceptable to American opinion. But long before Washington pronounced its condemnation, Paris was utterly disillusioned. Every delegate in Paris was charged with some special national interest; but before these interests were regulated, or even considered, the delegates were invited to set up some wholly new tribunal with indefinite powers before whose bar national ambitions might perhaps be called hereafter to plead justification. Prepared in such an atmosphere, the Covenant of the League was necessarily cumbered about with reservations. The

result is a compromise which leaves dissatisfied both the nationalism which it holds in check and the idealism to which it refuses unlimited scope. There is no reason to despair of the League. At its least it is a grand foundation for future statesmanship to build upon. But the spirit which expressed itself in the draft of the Covenant is precisely the spirit which, otherwise guided, would have brought unity and breadth of outlook to the unravelment of the European tangle. The League of Nations as at present constituted can unravel no tangles. It can and will prevent the development in future of such chronic troubles as ever seek and fail to find a remedy in war. By keeping disputes within bounds, a work for which its constitution fits it, it will render incalculable service to civilisation. But it is in no condition as yet to enter upon its inheritance. Before it can effectively apply itself to secular disputes whose very mention threatens the unanimity which is the breath of its being, it must spend a generation in knitting itself together. There is strength in the League, but not in our time can it be made manifest. The Eastern question is of our time, and it will be dealt with as heretofore by a compromise between the possibly conflicting objectives of the interested powers. We of the present have put upon the future a great burden of debt. In one respect at least the future

has had its revenge upon the present. For the sake of the future we have given to the elaboration of the League of Nations all the insight and the enthusiasm which might have promoted a comprehensive settlement of Europe. The Eastern question is still with us, and is all the more dangerous because it must now be treated in isolation, a method which drives the Powers concerned back on to the least promising of their diplomatic traditions. For this situation the responsibility is in part America's. There is something pathetically wrong-headed in the popular American contention that, having won the war for her European Allies, the United States may now leave them to settle their own affairs. Whatever it may have been in the war, the influence of the United States was decisive at the peace table. For good or for evil—possibly for both—the American President widened the scope of the conference beyond the limits contemplated by European statesmen. The consequences have to be faced by Europe alone, and in facing them Europe is well aware at whose behest she let pass, for the sake of greater gains, the supreme opportunity of her own history.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEUTRALITY OF SPAIN AND THE INTERVENTION OF ITALY

EUROPEAN history is a baffling theme to handle, not so much because it is complex as because it is continuous. For examination purposes it is broken up into periods—The Crusades, Empire and Papacy, the Reformation, the French Revolution, and the like. But these periods have no complete unity of their own. Rather are they chapters in the history of those two permanent causes of European unrest: the Eastern and the Western questions. So vital are these questions that when either of them becomes acute it is difficult for any power to remain unaffected which either has local interests or pursues a general European policy. Hence it is in no way surprising that these two questions should sufficiently account for the collapse of the European system in 1914. They explain the antagonism between Russia and Austria on the one part and France and Germany on the other. They explain the successive embroilment of Turkey and of the three Balkan States originally neutral. They explain the conclusion of an alliance

between France and Russia, and of a more compact coalition between Germany and Austria. But they do not explain, they rather exhibit as inexplicable the policy of the two remaining continental Mediterranean Powers. It is still necessary to account for the permanent neutrality of Spain and the initial neutrality of Italy in face of such powerful impulses towards war.

The neutrality of Spain was the most formidable success scored by German diplomacy. Historically, France has for some centuries carried Spain on her back in her international relations. Both powers have substantially the same Mediterranean interests. Since neither is strong enough to dominate the Western basin, both desire an equilibrium to which each shall contribute. A touch of rivalry has generally hampered the assessment of the respective contributions, but as France is too strong for Spain to antagonise, and Spain too strong for France to humiliate, tact and patience have rounded successive awkward corners. The arrangement for the partition of Morocco was, on the whole, a fair division of sovereignty. As such it was generally acquiesced in by Spanish opinion, and, had war arisen over Morocco in 1906, the probabilities are that Spain would have stood by France's side. By 1914, however, there was no longer any question of a Spanish departure from

neutrality. The German policy of peaceful penetration had exploited Spanish pride and religious conservatism to good effect. When the war was well advanced Senor Maura, perhaps the strongest man in Spain, made a public declaration to the effect that the old conditions of a Franco-Spanish understanding could no longer be maintained.[1] In fact, Spain had moved so far from her old sense of community of interest with France that she remained neutral because she wished well to neither belligerent. It is true that this change accentuated the internal divisions which were Spain's curse throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century and has imperilled the constitutional settlement which restored the Monarchy. These considerations which may yet make Spanish statesmen rue their work were, however, of no concern to Germany. Her interest was solely to keep Spain apart from France, for only in moments of megalomania can she have dreamed of ranging Spain among her own allies. It must be admitted that her policy met with complete success.

Complete failure, on the other hand, attended her laborious work in Italy. The development of Italian policy is of exceptional interest because, as her geographical position indicates, Italy is equally

[1] Senor Maura is a practical politician and has since recanted his views.

interested in the Eastern and in the Western question, and her dual interests have proved most difficult to harmonise. From the completion of her unity to the end of the nineteenth century her policy was on the whole anti-French and anti-Russian.[1] But as German ambitions developed, Italy's relations with France improved, while her relations with Russia became cordial. The outbreak of war found the new orientation incomplete, and naturally evoked a declaration of neutrality. Ten months later Italy definitely drew her sword against one of her former allies, though a long time was still to elapse before Germany was also added to the tale of her enemies.

The motives which actuated this remarkable change of front must now be set forth, and again we are confronted with evidence of the ultimate omnipotence of ideas. Italian unity was achieved against Austria and at her cost. To the Italian mind Austria was the hereditary enemy, and any Italian-speaking peoples under Austrian rule called for redemption. In the last resort it was the thought of unredeemed Italy that carried the Italian nation into war.

[1] Anti-French because France was her rival in plans of expansion in Northern Africa and the Levant, and had actually forestalled her in the occupation of Tunis; and anti-Russian because Russia menaced the continued existence in Europe of the weak Turkey, whose possession of a long stretch of the eastern seaboard of the Adriatic cushioned Italy's own Adriatic coastline from attack. The situation is discussed in fuller detail below.

But first certain very formidable obstacles had to be overcome. Italian unity was originally achieved by French aid. Victor Emannuel owed to Napoleon III. the province of Lombardy, and, though less directly, his proud title of King of Italy. But he paid the French Emperor's price. Not only had he to surrender Nice and Savoy—so that the great Nizzard Garibaldi could bitterly proclaim himself an exile from his native land—but he had to be content to receive a kingdom lacking a capital. Napoleon III. was too deeply entangled with the clericals at home to acquiesce in the Italian solution of the Roman question. For ten years Napoleon's troops had been maintaining the Pope in Rome. The French garrison was withdrawn after Sadowa, but French policy persisted until Sedan. Three weeks later the temporal power fell and the King of Italy entered into his own. Of the many consequences of the Empire's catastrophe only one has endured. Sedan made Metz and Strasbourg German territory, and they are again a part of France; it made Germany a military Empire, and Germany is become a bourgeois republic; but it also made Rome Italian, and Rome is Italian yet.

Bismarck was not slow to avail himself of the fact that Italian unity owed its consummation to Prussia's sword. He pointed to the uneasiness

with which French opinion contemplated the ambitions of the newly-organised Italian State. He intensified Italian suspicions by encouraging France to establish herself in Tunis—a region largely populated by Italian emigrants. Having made Italy conscious of her isolation in the Mediterranean world, he entangled her in the Triple Alliance, an arrangement which appeared to offer her security without any counter obligations.

Italian opinion, which at first accepted this treaty as a bulwark against France, afterwards came to regard it as an insurance against Austria. The Austrian position was most difficult, and Bismarck regulated it with his usual skill. Italy possesses a strong land frontier but a long and exposed coast line. Austria, however, retained in her hands all the important passes of the Eastern Alps, and so threatened Italy by land. Austria also held Trieste and the Dalmatian coast, and could, therefore, threaten Eastern Italy by sea. But the chief ports of Italy are on her Western coasts, and France, not Austria, possessed the predominant naval strength. Italy must, therefore, base her main fleet on Naples and Genoa, not on Brindisi and Venice. But what of Italian security in the Adriatic? It reposed on two guarantees. In the first place the military value of the magnificent

harbour of Cattaro was nullified by assigning to Montenegro the height by which it is dominated; and in the second place the bulk of the continental coast line remained in the powerless hands of the Turk. Italy was thus the champion of Turkish integrity in Europe for much the same reason as Britain was its champion in Asia Minor. The Turk was too weak to be a dangerous neighbour; the same could not be said of any possible heir to the Turk's estate. In Italy's case the heir to be dreaded was Austria. Once let Austria extend her possessions along the Dalmatian coast, once let her swallow Montenegro and annex Albania, and she would dominate the Straits of Otranto and control the Adriatic. It behoved Italian statesmanship to avert such a contingency at all costs. With Germany for honest broker, Italy and Austria agreed to maintain the *status quo* in the Near East. Both Powers passed a self-denying ordinance which endured until the Austrian grab at Bosnia and the Italian grab at Tripoli created a situation never contemplated by the seventh clause of the Treaty of Alliance. An acrimonious dispute as to the exact meaning of this clause under the new conditions led Italy to denounce the Triplice and enter the war. But it is important to note that to the very last Austria offered generous terms. She was prepared to cede a portion of the unredeemed

Trentino. By offering to make Trieste a free port she would have altered the balance in the Northern Adriatic in Italy's favour. She was ready to negotiate over Albania and to recognise Italy's predominant interest in the Straits of Otranto. On the other hand, a Russian victory involved a Serb window on the Adriatic, and sooner or later a dispute with a Slav confederacy for the sovereignty of its waters. When these facts are weighed, and when it is remembered that the Central Powers asked no more than a maintenance of Italian neutrality, Signor Giolitti's pro-Germanism ceases to wear the unpatriotic aspect so frequently attributed to it by the French and British Press. Diplomatically speaking, Italy would have done very well in the present and averted a real danger of the future had she closed with the Austro-German offer. That she brushed it aside and preferred to fight for her just claims was due to nothing but the power of sentiment, to the popular feeling that, alliance or no alliance, Austria was the enemy and her difficulty Italy's opportunity. The national idea prevailed against diplomatic calculation and the counsels of so adroit a manipulator of Italian opinion as Signor Giolitti. With considerable distrust of Russia, and with no great sympathy for the French and British democracies, commercially her superiors, and in her own Mediterranean sphere her rivals,

Italy responded in the crisis to her deepest instincts and again attacked the stranger.

Thanks to Trotsky's not entirely disinterested contribution to historical study, the world is acquainted with the terms on which Italy entered the Grand Alliance. They were minutely elaborated by Italian statesmen oppressed by the weight of a tradition. They knew that Italy could not unify herself without the consent of Europe. Cavour's principle, impressed on his own mind by the disaster of 1848, that Italy required Allies not only to defeat Austria but to make Austria realise that her defeat was final, was faithfully observed by his successors. Signor Salandra and Baron Sonnino would not have been good Italians had they not insisted that the new frontiers of Italy should be guaranteed by Britain, France and Russia. But the memory of the capricious policy of Napoleon III. and of the humiliation which he had imposed upon Italy in the moment of her triumph, drove the authors of the Treaty of 1915 to adopt another and more questionable resolution. They would see to it that Italy should not again be reduced to diplomatic helplessness by the refusal of her allies to allow her to reap the full fruits of victory, and they, therefore, defined the future frontiers of their country in precise detail. Events have written an ironical commentary upon their foresight. It is

clear that Baron Sonnino did not contemplate—his subsequent attitude towards Jugo-Slavia suggests that he did not desire—the disappearance of Austria-Hungary. The Danube Monarchy was to be stripped of its Italian provinces and rendered incapable of undertaking a war of revenge by sea as well as by land. The advantages of the strategic frontier, retained by Austria after 1866, were at length to be transferred to Italy, and the Italian map of the Adriatic was prepared with a view to making Austria-Hungary realise the hopelessness of war without making her position intolerable in time of peace. She was to lose her actual and potential naval bases, but was to retain her commercial outlet. It would appear that what was contemplated was a balance of power on the Eastern Adriatic, Italy holding the most advantageous points, and Austria and Serbia keeping one another in check. Whether this arrangement was originally prepared by the Italian statesmen or was a compromise forced upon them by the opposition of the Entente to their original terms is a question which will not be cleared up until the history of the negotiations is published. But at least there can be no doubt of the intention of the treaty as eventually drafted, and of its manifest incompatibility with the situation as it actually developed. Instead of an Italy so strongly established on the eastern

seaboard of the Adriatic that she could impose her will on her Austrian and Serbian neighbours, there was revealed to horror-stricken patriots the vision of an Italy whose precarious foothold on the opposite coast was threatened by an aggressive Jugo-Slavia. The problem which thus presented itself to Italy for solution was essentially a problem of foreign policy. Upon what terms were two distinct nations, one Latin, the other Slav, to arrange for the common use of the strip of sea between them? A similar problem had once confronted Britain and France in regard to the Channel, and was responsible for the five centuries of warfare which began with the Conquest and ended with the loss of Calais. When Signor Nitti came to London a year after the armistice it might have been possible for Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau to bid him note the lesson of their countries' past; but any such argument would have been unintelligible to Italian opinion at the end of 1918. Italy had not then realised the meaning of foreign policy. Her own tradition cut her off from any conception of a theory of international relations. For three generations she had not pursued, and could not pursue, a foreign policy in the strict sense of the term. What passed with her for a foreign policy was really an essential bye-product of her domestic Policy. Her

business was to achieve her unity. It was a business impossible of achievement without war. But the war would not be waged against Austria as such—against a foreign power whose interests clashed with her own—but against Austria as the usurper of sovereignty over a portion of Italian territory. A similar limitation of outlook governed French foreign policy from 1870 to 1914. But the traditions of France enabled her to conceive of her own ambitions as an element in the general European situation, whereas to Italy there was no general European situation; there was only her passion for unity. Accordingly when the disintegration of Austria confronted Italy with a new situation on the Adriatic she sought at first to interpret it in the old domestic terms. Jugo-Slavia was not a foreign Power with legitimate interests in the Adriatic; she was a tyrant power improperly claiming to make Italians her vassals. She was Austria's heir reviving Austria's pretensions. Having thus, as it were by force of habit, misinterpreted the situation, Italy claimed Fiume as essential to her unity, and broke into indignation with her allies because they did not at once endorse her claim. It seemed to Italians that the grand old cause was still not won, that yet another battle remained to be fought; and when D'Annunzio set out on his filabustering expedition all Italy cheered him as a second Garibaldi.

In all this there is nothing surprising. The traditions of a century's thought cannot be broken in a moment. What is significant and admirable is that the truth of the situation broke upon Italy with wonderful rapidity in the closing weeks of 1919. Something happened, and of a sudden it was understood that D'Annunzio was no Garibaldi seeking to join Italians to Italy, that his enterprise had little more to do with national unity than Dandolo's conquest of Constantinople seven centuries before, and that the first use that Italy was making of her newly completed liberty was to impose her sovereignty over Slavs themselves just redeemed from parallel servitude. Fiume, for whose possession Italy had been willing to challenge the world, ceased to be the symbol of her unity. It took its proper status as a troublesome and complex element of foreign policy, the central knot in the tangle of Latin and Serb interests which Austria had set herself to produce and which Italian and Jugo-Slav statesmanship must combine to unravel.

All through the latter part of 1919 the world was so perplexed by the Russian enigma that it lacked leisure to notice that another question, of the utmost moment to civilisation, had been asked and answered. The Russian people are free, and we cannot yet decide what their freedom means

to themselves or to us. But the Italian people are also free, and they have made it clear that their freedom will be true to its own best traditions. It would indeed be tragic were the liberty of Italy, cherished and worked for as it has been by so many of the most illustrious spirits of the nineteenth century, to become the parent of a new despotism. Happily Italy has conjured away that menace. The current of Italian political thought has flowed in a new direction since 1919. The country has realised that Italian unity, at last achieved geographically, is still far from complete politically. The problem with which Italy is now struggling is an inheritance of 1860 when circumstances forced upon her a degree of unity for which her spirit was not quite ripe. Englishmen are familiar with a cleavage between urban and rural sentiment, and study with bewilderment the politics of such a country as Belgium, where this fundamental distinction is almost obliterated. But even Englishmen have shaken their heads over the gulf which formerly parted town and country in Italy. The townsman was alert, critical, ambitious; the *contadino* stolid, obedient, unenterprising. The two types seemed to have nothing to say to one another. But during the first two and a half years of the war the separate elements of the nation were definitely fused, and it was the whole nation that

rallied after the blow of Caporetto, displaying under the shock of disaster a splendid and universal equanimity which, as is now known, robbed Austria of the last breath of her old domineering temper and left her with no heart for a new offensive and incapable of resistance to the counter-blow. This new spirit of complete unity at home has been struggling to expression through the series of crises which have made up the country's political history since the armistice. Three bodies of opinion have sought to organise themselves with a view to dominating Italy at this cross-roads of her destinies. The clericals, the socialists, and the young patriots have all created parties truly national in their geographical range, and have justified themselves at the elections—in so far as elections may be taken as evidence of the movement of opinion in Italy—not only by the actual number of seats won, but by their triumphs in regions where they were thought to be weak. The old political landmarks have disappeared, and the outlines of the new system have not yet been traced, so that superficially Italian affairs are in a confusion which has called for the masterful hand of a dictator. But it is the confusion which comes of the first play of great forces long accumulating and at last released. The socialists, who believed themselves ready, acted first, and appear to have

failed miserably. Yet even they have made one notable contribution to the quality of the Italy of to-morrow. Their influence was at its height in the elections held a year after the war, and one of the first acts of the new Parliament, in which they were so powerful, was to pass a resolution of sympathy with Russia. It was a most significant new departure. Russia was no longer the counterpoise to Austria with whom an anti-Austrian Italy had sought to be on cordial terms. She was something entirely remote and foreign, and the Italy of 1913 would scarcely have been aware of her existence. But the Italy of 1919 felt that she had a message to give to the world, that it was her duty to proclaim her future status among its peoples; to declare, in fact, her foreign policy. She has since declared it more elaborately but perhaps less spontaneously amid boisterous manifestations of national self-consciousness which have indicated that her new sentiments consort but ill with her old institutions. No one who loves her—and it is one of the privileges of Englishmen to hold Italy in special affection—can look without apprehension on the rents which the new parties have already made in her somewhat flimsy constitutional fabric. But no one who has watched her during her present critical phase of rapid development can doubt her future. The new speech of the Italian people is

rough; diplomatists may well deplore its emphasis, but its sense is altogether good. The central Mediterranean is now dominated by a nation well schooled by patience and adversity, conscious of its inspiring inheritance, aware of the lofty place it has now gained in the world, facing its future with fine temper and a firm grip of ideals. The Italian question which vexed Europe for just over 400 years is at last finally settled; and all Europe can now look on the fruits of its work with confidence and hope.

CHAPTER IX

THE ACTION OF BRITAIN

So far as the continental Great Powers are concerned, our analysis is now complete. But the action of Britain, the traditional insular makeweight in European politics, has still to be explained. To themselves the British people are the most consistent, to continental observers the most incalculable of nations. And, indeed, what explanation is to be given of the paradox that a Power without European territorial interests should at times use every ounce of its strength in promoting a particular territorial settlement? The Germans, with their usual arrogant misjudgment of the motives of others, had no difficulty in accounting for Britain's intervention. It was based, they explained, on commercial jealousy of a successful rival. Britain regarded the war, they said, as a piece of business which she was prepared to finance. She would fight, they said, to the last Russian. The actual conduct of Britain during the war, and in particular her almost miraculous transformation into a great military Power, render it superfluous to reply to this contention. But the true mainspring of

British policy still requires to be revealed. It is no explanation to say that Britain went to war in defence of Belgium. The fact is admitted, but why should Britain have pledged herself to defend Belgium, and why, having pledged herself, should she defend Belgium in the Dardanelles and Mesopotamia? Assuredly some fundamental instinct must have been touched for the British people to have been stirred to such far-flung and titanic efforts.

Now there is one instinct which is as old as English history—is, indeed, the very condition of English history—the instinct towards sea supremacy. It has changed its form throughout the centuries. To-day, when the world is our market and our source of supply, it connotes the mastery of the ocean routes. In mediæval times it was limited to the narrow seas about our islands. But in itself the instinct persists unchanged. It found literary expression as early as the time of Edward III. An England which ceased to command the seas—be that term interpreted narrowly or widely—ceased to be free. Our country's history is rich in proof of this doctrine. Evidence can be culled from any century from the Napoleonic wars back to the Norman Conquest, and through the dim epochs beyond, right to Roman times. But what did sea supremacy in practice involve? England

lies at an angle off the adjoining continent. The Straits of Dover are the vital point, and beyond them on either side England is accessible to attack from the Low Countries and from France—the danger diminishing as the mainland slopes away to the north-east and to the west. In other words, our triangular island is vulnerable on two sides. Only the western coast is safe, and even then only if Ireland be friendly or harmless. (In this latter fact resides the germ of the Irish question.)

These geographical features determine the main conditions of British naval defence. At a very early period it became clear that successful defence was impossible if our southern and eastern coasts were menaced simultaneously. To find definite proof of this it is necessary to go back to the last days of the Saxon Kings—a fact which is itself evidence of the early date at which the dominant strategical conditions were correctly appreciated. We do not know the details of the defence schemes elaborated by King Harold's government. But we know that, while Harold was watching the preparations of Normandy to the south, Tostig invaded the north; and while Harold was defeating Tostig, the Norman Duke crossed the Channel. The war on two fronts was beyond the strength of the Saxon Monarchy. The Conqueror himself correctly judged the situation, and, while his devastation of

Yorkshire was intended to destroy the focus of rebellion on which a northern invader might rely, he ensured the consolidation of his kingdom by maintaining with many difficulties his hold on his own dukedom, thereby freeing himself from all danger on the south. From the Conqueror's time onwards, the main line of British policy is clearly traced. Either the southern or the eastern coast must be secure. England can make front against either side of the enclosing angle, but not against both. It followed that either the Low Countries or the French Channel ports must be preserved at all costs from falling into the hands of a great continental military Power, capable of gathering up the resources of Europe for an attack on England. This principle has dictated English foreign policy from Norman times to the present day, and gives the clue to every great continental war which this country has ever waged.

The chance that William's dukedom was situated in Normandy and not in Flanders determined England's initial choice of the coast to be kept secure. For almost 500 years she was engaged in constantly renewed struggles with France for the possession of the Channel ports. This is the permanent objective of the French wars, with their bewildering vicissitudes—wars now of only archæological interest, but important even yet

because they first gave the English people that taste for expansion which has meant so much to the world. To make the Channel ports safe it was necessary to control the Hinterland. But the Hinterland stretched perpetually south, and the vigorous English kings, seeking glory, plunder, and a definite frontier, pushed on and on until the Plantagenet Empire stretched from the Channel to the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean. These transient conquests were revived by Henry V., only to be abolished utterly in the dismal century which followed his brilliant reign. The turning point was reached with the loss of Calais in 1553. English policy at once oriented itself anew with a rapidity which illustrates the instinctive sureness with which nations, like individuals, react to situations threatening their lives. The French possession of the Channel ports was accepted as a permanent fact, and English interests immediately shifted from the southern to the eastern coast. Antwerp replaced Calais as the dominant point, and the lapse of a generation saw England at death grips with Spain for the freedom of the Low Countries. The tigerish ferocity with which England attacked the masters of territory held of no account in Mary Tudor's time, may well have puzzled King Philip's ministers, and they, too, like the Germans of later date, may well have

attributed it to jealousy of a Power better organised than herself. But England's true motive was self-preservation, and it was with this same motive that she challenged and reduced the nascent power of Holland, fought Louis XIV. over the barrier fortresses, fought Napoleon over the control of the Scheldt, and in the period of consolidation after Waterloo took steps to ensure the perpetual neutrality of Belgium. The German demand for the free passage of their troops through neutral territory again loaded the pistol pointed at the heart of England, and the ancient popular instinct, stronger than any counsel of statesmanship, at once drove the nation to arms. The traditional sense of the conditions of the country's safety converted a pacific people to war in forty-eight hours, and even in the gloomiest days of 1917 and 1918 its strength remained such that the most resolute pacifist dared not suggest an arrangement based on anything short of the complete restoration of Belgian independence.

Such is the insular aspect of British sea supremacy. Such are the conditions, neglect of which will convert this country, in Lord Grey's pregnant phrase, into the conscript appanage of a foreign Power. But with the expansion of the British overseas, sea supremacy has ceased to be insular. It has acquired an imperial aspect which can also

be expressed in a formula. Geographically our island belongs to the northern side of the European triangle and to the group of peninsulas jutting out from it. Historically this connection—apart from the question of the adjacent coasts—has only been asserted at the rarest intervals. It found expression in the Saxon and Danish invasions and in the organisation of a Northern Empire under Canute, but then disappears almost until Napoleonic times. In her period of weakness following the loss of the American colonies Britain withdrew her fleet altogether from the Mediterranean until Nelson triumphantly reasserted her old mastery at the Battle of the Nile. But her position in the Baltic, though dangerously compromised by the League of Armed Neutrality, was obstinately maintained. Maintenance was indeed vital, for from the Baltic ports the country drew timber for its ships, and to a considerable extent wheat for its people; and the battle of Copenhagen was fought to ensure these essential supplies. But in the nineteenth century the importance of the Baltic steadily waned, and on the outbreak of war in 1914 opinion contemplated its closing with composure. Conditions, have, however, again been changed by our interest in maintaining the newly restored independence of Poland, and free access to the Baltic has been secured by the terms imposed on Germany.

Far more intimate has been the British connection with the Mediterranean world, affording yet another illustration of the triumph of ideas over facts. First, this country was incorporated in the orbit of the Roman Empire, and after the Empire had broken up Roman Christianity asserted its sway. Even Canute visited Rome—a journey not undertaken by any of his successors on the throne before Edward VII. After the conquest, feudalism, religion, and the French wars all combined to turn the country's attention southward. In the sixteenth century the reformation and the coincident social revolution broke the old spell, but it was immediately forged anew by the renaissance and by the great discoveries which proclaimed the Mediterranean the path of adventure and the gateway of the East. Only in the period between the defeat of the Armada and the loss of the American colonies did English interest in the Mediterranean really fade. Despite the spasmodic temptations of Oriental trade the country then addressed itself more and more to the consolidation of her transatlantic Empire, and threatened to turn her back on Europe all together. The retrocession of Gibraltar was contemplated more than once during the eighteenth century. But Napoleon's dreams of Oriental conquest roused Britain to the meaning of her Indian Empire, and, once aroused,

she set to work to make her path to it secure. The acquisition of Malta, Cyprus, and Egypt gave her a line of communications which the Germans realised to be the spinal cord of the British Imperial system. Meanwhile the defence of India itself had become a mere element in the protection of the Indian Ocean, which washes the shores not only of India itself but of Britain's tropical African Empire and of her South African and Australian Dominions. During the war the Germans sometimes attempted to meet attacks on their system of military autocracy which did duty for a government by references to Britain's tyrannous control of the seas. The condition of the Indian Ocean throughout the peace answers their charge. It was a British lake. Its key-points—Aden, Capetown, Sydney, Singapore, Hongkong—were in British hands. But no warships steamed its surface, and when, early in the war, a random German cruiser ran amok in its waters, fleets had to be summoned hundreds of miles to hunt it down and destroy it. But within these monopolised waters all might come and go at will. Portugal, France, Germany herself, held portions of its coasts, and it was in or across the Indian Ocean that the German mercantile marine sought and found some of its best opportunities for development.

The defensive organisation which gave security

throughout this vast area to its indigenous peoples and to the colonists of all nations was far-flung and very simple; but just because of its tenuity every thrill and quiver that passed through Asia and Eastern Europe was felt along the whole line from Aden to Hongkong. It was felt there rather than along the southern defences from Capetown to Singapore, because it was from the north that danger threatened. Moreover, despite occasional alarmist references to the Yellow Peril, the true direction of danger was the north-west. The defence of India was primarily planned to meet aggression from this quarter, and was the most striking as well as the most important feature of the whole scheme. Britain and her Empire live and breathe by the Navy, and it was vital that no foreign Power should secure a base on the Indian Ocean. The British lake could suffer no competition in naval armaments. To guarantee her sovereignty Britain guarded the approaches both by sea and by land, and in place of naval squadrons maintained an army on the Indian mountain frontier. The Victorian administration of India was sometimes criticised on the ground that the army in India, both British and Indian, though discharging an Imperial as well as an Indian obligation, was financed entirely from Indian funds. The criticism, while not without point, could be met by a reference

to the part played by the army in preserving the internal tranquillity of India. With the introduction, however, of the new constitution, the relations of government and army were necessarily modified, and it would have been well if the financial aspect of the new conditions had been thoroughly considered before the reforms were brought into operation. Disregard of it has greatly increased the difficulties of transition from autocratic to constitutional government. Army charges occupy a wholly disproportionate place in the Indian Budget, and the Legislative Assembly, perceiving that Indian shoulders are being made to bear a burden which should equitably be shared by other elements in the British Empire, has pushed its opposition to a point which threatens to wreck the whole Parliamentary scheme. In its present excited state Indian opinion argues that the burden has been unfairly distributed from the first. But it is only right to note that under the old régime the army in India was not the only defence of the Indian Ocean. British sea power, to which India contributed nothing, kept its waters, even though its exercise was not manifest. The gateways of the Ocean—Aden and Hongkong in particular—were acquired and held by sea-power, and if India defended the Empire in the Khyber Pass, the Empire defended India in the Suez Canal. The

sole idea of the defence scheme was, as has been said, to keep all foreign naval Powers aloof, and its execution is a most illuminating example of correct amphibious thinking.

It must be admitted that the conditions which we postulated as essential were sweeping enough. Geographically there is a clear comparison between India and Italy. Both countries are peninsulas, widely exposed to attack from the sea and protected on the landward side by a strong mountain frontier. But politically the difference is extreme. Italy's western coast is within striking distance of a great naval Power, whereas Britain keeps the Indian Ocean clear as far as the Canal and the head of the Persian Gulf. (Indeed, it was a criticism of the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 that our predominant interests in the Gulf were not explicitly recognised, and the insistence laid upon them in the despatch to our ambassador in Petrograd which was published simultaneously with the treaty shows that the Foreign Office was conscious of the omission.) The land opposite Italy's eastern coast was, for the most part, carefully kept in Turkey's conveniently powerless hands. Britain, however, while not seriously treating Burma as a menace to the security of Calcutta, deemed it safer to annex the province, and was once stirred to measurable distance of war by French pretensions

in Siam. By land the Italian frontier is contiguous with that of France in the west; the centre is covered by neutral Switzerland; on the east the approaches were retained in Austrian hands. The Indian frontier, on the contrary, is protected by a ring of buffer States—Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet —and Mr. Balfour, in a famous statement on the work of the Imperial Defence Committee delivered only nine years before the war, made it abundantly clear that Britain would not permit any of these States to be linked up with the railway system of the Hinterland. To draw a political parallel between Italy and India before the war we must imagine Russia firmly established on the Gulf, and an aggressive China mistress of Tibet and able to attack a powerless Burma. The contrast may serve to explain and justify the tortuous character of Italy's diplomacy and the occasional vacillations of her policy.

The defensive scheme for the Indian Ocean just described did not stand alone. In time of crisis it required to be in a position to draw reinforcements from home. It had, therefore, to be brought into satisfactory relation with the main line of communication running westward and northward through the Canal and past Malta and Gibraltar to the Channel. To meet this need the system of buffer States was prolonged westward.

A weak Turkey occupying the block of land between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf secured the line of communications from attack, and it was in appreciation of this that Britain guaranteed the integrity of the Turkish Dominions in Asia. In return for this guarantee she received the usufruct of Cyprus, Disraeli's object in acquiring the island being to provide the sea-line with an additional bulwark against a flank thrust from Constantinople. This was the chief potential menace to Indian and Imperial security during the Victorian era. Next in importance came the danger of a Russian attack through Afghanistan—a danger very vividly apprehended during Mr. Gladstone's second administration; and thirdly, and much more faintly, the possibility of a Russian descent on the Gulf. In all three cases Russia was the enemy, and the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907, with its promise of the liquidation of outstanding difficulties, may be said to have abolished the old problem of Imperial defence in Asia. The progress and ambitions of the Soviet Power have now revived the Russian menace in a new form, but for ten critical years India had no need to guard herself against a possible attack from the north. The respite freed Indian troops for service overseas and enabled them to meet a blow, delivered from Constantinople, at British supremacy in the

Persian Gulf. After initial misfortunes, the Indian Army successfully addressed herself to a task alien to its functions as originally contemplated. It faced the German instead of the Russian, and defended India in Palestine and Mesopotamia and not in Afghanistan.

The stages in this startling development, undreamt of at the beginning of the century, are easy to trace. The first challenge to the British monopoly of the Indian Ocean was given by the Baghdad railway concession. For a long time British opinion refused to regard this concession seriously. It was held to be a scrap of paper, worthless in practice because Germany lacked the capital required to give effect to its provisions. Beyond doubt Germany could have provided the capital had she so chosen; shortage of cash was not allowed to impede the construction of the Hedjaz line. But wisely enough she did not so choose, being fully aware that impetuous construction would have brought a very hornet's nest of diplomatic difficulties about her ears. She, therefore, preferred the far more subtle policy of representing the line as an international enterprise in which French and British capital could appropriately participate. The London money market was cautiously interested. Communications, in themselves a novelty, as Lord Lansdowne was careful to explain

at the time, passed between the City and Downing Street; and in the end the proposal for British participation was rejected. The offer was, in fact, a trap. International though the line might have been in name, the Turks would be aware that the Germans had built it, and every fishplate would have served to rivet German influence over the whole width of Asia Minor from sea to sea. Meanwhile the pertinacious Germans, nowise discouraged by their initial failure, proceeded with the construction of sections of the line as an earnest of their sincerity, and set about straightening out the diplomatic tangle. German opinion was fully aware that the Baghdad railway concession summed up the fruits of Germany's Turkish policy, and detailed references to the enterprise were made in the German Press. The work went on, and the diplomatic negotiations were not unsuccessful. Russia was cajoled into an agreement by which Germany secured the withdrawal of opposition to a tangible project by pledging herself to support the somewhat nebulous scheme of a trans-Persian line. French susceptibilities as to Syria were soothed by a change in the Mediterranean terminus. Only British opposition remained to be overcome, and negotiations were still in progress when the outbreak of war cut them short.

There can be no doubt that Britain was

unfavourable to the whole enterprise. Direct rail communication between Europe and Baghdad seriously weakened the fabric of buffer States with which Britain had cushioned India. But the position became far more serious if the line were prolonged from Baghdad to the Gulf. There were some who urged that with the Tigris and the Euphrates to carry traffic there was no need for a railway at all. Others, admitting that a railway would avoid breaking bulk, and that its extension to a port accessible to ocean-going ships could not be delayed indefinitely, insisted that Britain could not allow the control of the Gulf section to rest in any hands but her own. British diplomacy, acting with extreme prudence, strengthened its position at Koweit, the projected Gulf terminus, to Turkey's manifest annoyance; and an agreement which would have prolonged the line to Basra but not beyond seemed at the point of conclusion. The war cut short negotiations. The much-discussed Gulf section has at length been built, but it has been built to serve the needs of an advancing Anglo-Indian Army, and control, it may be presumed, will rest with its constructors.

In building the line herself Britain has abandoned her old hostile attitude towards the construction of railways in the Middle East—a very significant change. It had, however, begun to manifest itself

before 1914. Apparently an understanding had been reached with Russia as to a Trans-Persian line, Britain's right to control the southern section being admitted. But Germany was unwilling to make any parallel concession as to the Gulf section, and the new rivalry of the two Powers in the Middle East became a matter of bazaar gossip. A German novelist of repute, in a book published shortly before the war,[1] showed an intelligent anticipation of events by making the long-expected Anglo-German crisis occur over Persia.

As a matter of fact Persia and the Baghdad line had nothing to do with the actual cause of conflict, which arose, as has been explained, out of a purely insular clash of policies. But German interests in Turkey had much to do with the extension of the war. It is now known that a Treaty of Alliance between Germany and Turkey was signed at the beginning of August, 1914. The fact may have been concealed from our ambassador at Constantinople, whose failure to grip the situation is manifest even in the carefully selected despatches of the Turkish blue-book. But even the most purblind diplomatist could not miss the significance of the arrival of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* in the Dardanelles. The danger of a reconstituted Turkish navy sallying out to attack British communications

[1] *Seine Englische Frau*, by Rudolf Stranz.

across the Mediterranean was patent, and it was a danger to which British opinion was very sensitive. Constantinople and Antwerp are, indeed, the only two places on the continent of Europe whose ownership is quite literally of vital interest to Britain. The autumn of 1914 saw the Germans in possession of both. The challenge to insular security had immediately been followed up by the challenge to Imperial security. In the light of the new facts the full menace of the Baghdad railway concession was revealed. The despatch of expeditionary forces to Gallipoli and Basra showed that British statesmanship had grasped the facts of the situation. The failure of both enterprises showed how inadequately the facts had been appreciated. As 1915 wore on the war entered on a more intense phase. Britain, which had first intervened as the champion of Belgium, slowly understood that her independence as a State and her position as the head of an Empire were equally imperilled. Gradually the opponents came to grips. The mistress of the seas raised and equipped a gigantic army to meet the Germans on land. The advisers of the War Lord planned the submarine campaign which should bring British sea supremacy to ruin. The issue was at last fairly joined, and on both sides it was seen that it must be fought out to the death.

CHAPTER X

THE IDEAS OF THE PEACE

Wars are provoked by intolerable situations, but situations do not of themselves become intolerable. "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." Nations go to war when they are unable any longer to endure the contrast between facts—real or potential—and their aspirations. Ideas make war as, in due time, they make peace, and it is from the study of the action and counter-action of ideas and facts on one another that historical thought derives its material and its attraction. During the war we all looked forward to the peace of ideas that was to end it. A German peace, Hindenburg called it, and in his epithet summed up the idea of a greater Germany—a dominant Germany—which drove his country into war. The peace of the Allies' vision was similarly summed up by President Wilson in a phrase that will go down to time. The Allies fought to make the world safe for democracy, and they proposed to effect territorial changes in Europe and elsewhere only so far as such changes appeared necessary as guarantees of democratic safety. Two official

attempts were made during the war to state these changes in geographical terms, the first by the Allies jointly in reply to a direct question from the United States Government, the second by Mr. Lloyd George by way of pointing out to the nation the goal of the last titanic effort to which it was summoned early in 1918. But when the President of the United States came to formulate the principles of peace he used somewhat less definite language, and ideas and facts jostle one another curiously in the famous fourteen points. The President was right. There is no abstractly just and danger-proof map of Europe. Even if the President, in enunciating his points, had completely ignored the historic past and had devoted his attention solely to the situation created by the war, his own principles would have given him two maps of Europe—the one to be imposed on an unregenerate Germany, the other to be framed in concert with a Germany showing some first faint appreciation of the democratic spirit. A similar contrast manifested itself in the calculations of the enemy. The war-map which, in their moment of apparent triumph, was issued by the German militarists as the very expression of their politics, was not only intolerable to civilisation because of the principle on which it was framed, but was repudiated, though with great caution, and indeed implicitly rather than

actually, by that section of German opinion which realised that the world is a community and not a hierarchy.

The statesmen who assembled in Paris to draw the final peace-map were thus confronted by two questions, connected but distinct, the answers to which would affect their draftsmanship. First, what were the ideas of which the new map was to be at any rate a tentative expression? Secondly, what were the actual obstacles to the attainment of those ideas which the new map must begin by sweeping away, not tentatively but for ever? The influence of President Wilson brought the latter question into the foreground. The delegates of the victorious Powers gave their first and best attention to the idea of some world unity, and it was only after drafting the Covenant of the League of Nations and after appreciating the limitations which its actual form had imposed upon their original vision, that they addressed themselves to the utter extinction of that idea of world-sovereignty to which their own conception was the reply. The Treaty as we know it first translates an idea into the terms of a mutual undertaking and then seeks to support the new arrangement by a whole system of material guarantees. Obviously these guarantees had to be sought against Germany and at her expense. Obviously, too, their strength would

depend on their authors' estimate of the Germany on which they were imposed. Terms too severe for a chastened Germany would be the just deserts of a Germany still unrepentant.

Superior persons, multitudes of whom haunted the ante-chambers of the Conference room, have condemned the treaty as vindictive and as calculated to arouse in Germany that very spirit of temporary acquiescence in the intolerable which the Germans once aroused in France and which far-sighted statesmanship would have sought to exorcise. These critics airily dismiss the peace as reactionary But a peace which is imposed on the vanquished and is not the compromise of a drawn war is always reactionary. By virtue of its very nature it can be nothing else. A war is a struggle between two ideas. One idea triumphs; its triumph is futile if it cannot destroy the material conditions from which the rival idea drew its strength. There is only one thing to be done. The beaten enemy must be put back into the position from which he started, but under conditions which preclude him from again taking the old aggressive course. Take, for example, the Treaty of Vienna. It was a thoroughly reactionary peace. It put France back where she was in 1792. It restored the Bourbons and erected in the Holy Alliance a guarantee,

effective so long as it endured, against the re-establishment of the Empire. But it could not undo the Revolution, and would not accept it; in this respect it was not reactionary, but, unhappily, not progressive either; it did nothing at all, with the result that Europe was in a ferment again as early as 1830. So again the Peace of Paris which ended the Crimean war was a reactionary peace. It gave Turkey another chance of which that Power failed to avail herself. It imposed certain guarantees on Russia, one of the chief of which was repudiated in 1870; and when war broke out again in 1876 the only feature which survived was the reactionary doctrine, challenged by Russia though respected even by Napoleon, that the fate of Turkey was the common concern of all Europe. Or take, as a last example, the Treaty of Vereeniging. It was thoroughly reactionary. It went back on the sixty-year old policy of allowing two nationalities to exist in South Africa. It backed the contrary policy with the final guarantee of annexation; and if the guarantee proves effective, it will have solved the South African question.

In truth there is everything to be said for reaction as a means of disposing of antagonisms that have led to war, provided only that it is sufficiently thorough. It puts the world back where

it was before the trouble began, and leaves it to work out a new future from the old starting-point with a clear warning of the fatal consequences of one course actually taken. No policy would give humanity a better chance, were it not that it is usually inapplicable. The Treaty of Vienna failed because it could not really set back the hands of the clock. It undid the consequences of the revolution but left the revolution. The Crimean treaty failed mainly because the Turk repeated his old misdeeds and ignored the warning. The Treaty of Vereeniging will fail if the tradition of Dutch independence is too strong to be scotched by union based on annexation.

Analysis of the Treaty of Versailles exhibits it as an interesting and carefully balanced experiment in partial reaction. The situation which the Treaty sought to liquidate can be stated simply enough. For centuries the weaknesses of disunited Germany had been a European nuisance; in the next phase the strength of a united Germany had become a universal menace; what was to be done now? The treaty answered the question by leaving Germany united but weak. It is matter of history that German unity was achieved by Prussia and was stamped with the aggressive, domineering temper of Frederick William I. and

Frederick the Great. The treaty compelled Germany to disgorge the various conquests offered by Prussia as bribes towards union, but even here a certain indecision was shown. The conquest of 1870 had to be renounced unconditionally, but the conquest of 1863 was referred to a plebiscite whose issue has confirmed Germany in her title to a portion of her military spoils. Similarly the conference stopped short of completely undoing the partition of Poland, a conquest which Polish helplessness had made possible without the preliminary of a war. The eastern frontier of Germany was the frontier of 1772, subject to modification by plebiscite. It is a notable experiment, this use of the ballot box to determine the measure of alien penetration and thus to act as a counter-check on reaction. Another check was provided by imposing a time limit. It was the original intention of some at least of the authors of the treaty to go back to 1740 and to undo the consequences of the Seven Years' War. Unless rumour is utterly at fault there were peace negotiations with Austria on the basis of retrocession of Silesia. The treaty left Silesia to Germany, but allowed a plebiscite to determine a possible Polish claim to its upper half. The region affected, however, constitutes an economic whole over which the two peoples concerned had distributed themselves according to their

economic capacities. It was, therefore, unsuited to plebiscitary demarcation, and the treaty itself laid down that the results of the voting were not to be regarded as altogether decisive. After great difficulties an unsatisfactory plan has been worked out on unsatisfactory lines, and this section of the treaty is only of interest because of its defects and of the opportunity which they have given to the League of Nations to exhibit its method of dealing with a serious quarrel between two nations. It should be noted that in this case the treaty availed itself of a plebiscite to evade a difficulty and not to balance reaction, and that the time limit beyond which reaction would not go coincides with the period during which the American colonies gradually asserted their claim to independence. The conjecture may be hazarded that American statesmanship shrank from putting the hands of the European clock back beyond 1770.[1]

French statesmanship was certainly troubled by no such chronological qualms. The French wished to make a thorough job of it, and to cancel German unity itself along with the aggressions which had accompanied its achievement. At quite an early

[1] In their arrangements for the future of Constantinople the Allies found inspiration in the facts of the early thirteenth century; but the United States took no part in elaborating the Turkish settlement.

stage of the war there were negotiations, of which Britain was kept in ignorance, between France and Russia for the dismemberment of Prussia by the establishment of a Rhenish republic. A movement for the creation of some such State arose in Germany after the armistice; but the Germans have contended, possibly with justice, that whatever strength it possessed was due to French encouragement. It seems certain that France would have welcomed—it may even be that she is still endeavouring to further—the break up of Germany into some half-dozen independent and very loosely associated States, and the treaty arrangements for the government of the Sarre valley represent a half-hearted approach to the French view. But if the French did not press their contention that German unity should be destroyed, they were quite firm in their insistence that it should not be further strengthened. The section of the treaty which enacts that Austria shall remain wholly independent of Germany is an evident concession to French feeling, and, outside France, has been generally and outspokenly condemned. An Austria established at foreigners' bidding and maintained by foreigners' charity is a visible affront to that ideal of unity which, achieved in victory and held untarnished in defeat, still holds impregnable sway over German hearts.

The Treaty of Versailles being thus exhibited as a piece of reaction qualified by the ballot-box and time, the question arises on what principle these qualifications were admitted. The cynical answer that there was no principle and that the form of the treaty was the result of haggling between statesmen of discordant views, does not altogether lack justification. It may point, for example, to the treatment of Austria and possibly, though not with full warrant, to the refusal of a plebiscite to Dantzig. In general, however, the treaty refused to push reaction to the point where it came into conflict with nationality. The Germans were a nation; therefore German unity, the expression of Germany's national consciousness, must be left undisturbed. Even such of Germany's conquests as had been thoroughly Germanised must be left to her, and where their sense of nationality was doubtful a plebiscite was to decide. But nationality itself, while controlling reaction and giving safety and self-assurance to its decisions, was subjected in turn to a still higher control. It was not to express itself in whatever way it pleased. Its form must be political and democratic. Organised as a military autocracy it was held intolerable. Accordingly the treaty left Germany a nation, but a very different nation from what Prussia had consistently made her. To English and American

minds there is no section of the treaty more thoroughly reasonable than that which reduced to a maximum of 40,000 the German army which began the war at about a hundred times that strength. Britain and America themselves dispense with standing armies, and neither their own experience in the war nor all their sympathy with their French allies has enabled them to realise that an army may be the central pillar of a whole national structure. There was, moreover, the glaring fact that Germany had habitually regarded her army not as an expression of nationality but as an instrument of aggression. It would, therefore, seem to follow that Germany with her army suppressed would be Germany still, the only difference being that her neighbours need dread her no longer. In fact, however, the enormous reduction of the German army involved enormous social consequences. Before the war Germany, despite her parody of a democratically chosen Parliament, was notoriously governed by her officer caste. The revolution deprived the members of this caste of their political power; the Treaty of Versailles went further and deprived them of their occupations. British and American opinion can hardly conceive of a caste every one of whose normal male members was destined from birth to wear an officer's uniform and nothing else. The

United States knows nothing of castes, and in Britain what is called the aristocracy does not include younger sons. But in Germany there was a whole section of society whose traditions excluded it from every occupation but the sword. Round this section German nationalism has grown. The Treaty of Versailles now bids the German nation find some other field of activity for its warrior caste; and the historian of the future will assuredly be at pains to record the effort of German nationality to endure under the new conditions thus suddenly prescribed for it.

Our present concern, however, is not with the practicability of the Versailles settlement, but with the motives that inspired it. Analysis shows that the treaty attempted the thoroughly matter-of-fact policy of wiping German conquests off the map. But this attempt was not fully carried out. Territorial reaction was controlled by respect for the idea of nationality, and the idea of nationality was itself bidden conform to a particular type of national organisation. The geographical and material terms of the treaty are thus seen to be framed in accordance with certain democratic ideas cherished by the victors; these ideas being so potent that they regulated the means adopted in dealing with the obstacles to their own

attainment. So regarded, the actual provisions of the territorial, military, and economic sections of the treaty become of secondary moment. It is time to turn to the ideas to which the victors have paid such unquestioning homage, and to ask whether they are compatible with the vision of a world made safe for democracy.

CHAPTER XI

THE COVENANT OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS; ITS ORIGIN AND PROSPECTS

THE nineteenth century—the spiritual parent of this war—has already receded so far since the summer of 1914 that we can pronounce upon its main characteristics as though we ourselves had never lived under their influence. It was conspicuous among all other periods for two things—for the advancement of science and for the establishment of national feeling as the dominant motive in politics. Both these characteristics affect the fortunes of democracy—the first as strongly though not as obviously as the second.

The last hundred years have seen an unparalleled change in the conditions of ordinary life. The possibilities of coal, petrol, and electricity were still latent when Napoleon died. The railway train and the steamship—to say nothing of the submarine, the motor-car, and the aeroplane—are their developments in our own time. They have affected not only the environment but the life of almost every human being on this planet; and the story of their growth is the supreme

tragedy of civilisation. So many hopes have been bound up with their progress. For the first time they made, or at least promised to make, the whole world accessible to its inhabitants. They seemed destined to abolish the old hatreds engendered by ignorance due to insurmountable difficulties of communication. Yet eventually they have proved ready ministers to secular antagonisms and have rendered them more acute; and at the last have extended the area of war, and have appallingly increased its sufferings. Of a truth the time has come when democracy must look critically on science and its work, and inquire whether it be friend or enemy. There was, indeed, an epoch when science seemed the guarantee of peace. Darwin wrote in a Europe for which war was still a memory and had not become a tradition. Men still aspired to a practical cosmopolitanism, and dreaded above all things the advent of some selfish adventurer who should aim at subverting their activities to his own ends. In this spirit they contemplated the newly-revealed majesty of natural law, drew from it the moral of their own insignificance and claimed that at last they could estimate the true pettiness of their quarrels. This attitude of mind, with its consequent hostility to all enthusiasms, was strong enough in Germany to wreck the political prospects of the revolution of

1848, and in England to misrepresent the true historical importance of the Crimean War; but after the middle of the century it rapidly waned. Natural laws came to be perceived as forces which it was not necessary to regard with unmitigated awe; they could be turned to profitable account, in a word—the characteristic word of the century —exploited. Exploited they were. Invention followed tremendous invention, and the tale of the exploitation of nature is not yet complete, though enough has been told to reveal the inward spirit of contemporary science. It has completely cast off the reverent spirit that pervades the *Origin of Species*. It is exultantly realistic. It looks for and accomplishes results, and it takes no thought of moral principle. A scientific man of the pure type will extort from the bye-products of a gas-works a new drug, a new colour, and a new explosive, and all three are equally good in his eyes. Whether humanity is better or worse off for their possession is no concern of his. His business is to find out all that is latent in the bye-products examined in his laboratory, and having solved his problem he is content.[1]

[1] Sometimes science is inspired by a motive less honourable than curiosity. "I am a Hollander, you know. I was making aeroplanes before the war broke out, and when the Germans asked me to make aeroplanes for them I could only agree to do so. *It was a purely financial matter.*"—M. Fokker in an interview, *Daily Telegraph*, 16/9/1919. (My italics.)

The war revealed the full menace of modern science and justified the warnings of those humanists whom a world anxious for profit and for what it was pleased to call progress had long derided as reactionaries. To-day science has exploited the possibilities of death as successfully as it had already exploited the possibilities of industrial development. Every month of the war saw some fresh scientific atrocity—another piece of scientific destruction or scientific massacre—in reality a new blow at civilisation, but approved or condemned by the man in the street according as it furthered or retarded his immediate aims. Our civilised world disdains the savage warfare which did not spare prisoners; but only a small minority in England was uncompromisingly hostile to any reprisals that imperilled non-combatant life, and apparently not one solitary voice in Germany protested against the indiscriminate murder of non-combatants by sea and land. For the future of democracy this is an intolerable state of affairs. Democracy implies that men shall live free lives in a free world. But what freedom can there be, in fact or in theory, when at any moment some new terrific engine of destruction is at the disposal of any power which seeks its triumph in the subjugation of its neighbours ? In a free world the menace of death will not be free, whereas now

science has made death its instrument. Yesterday a button was pressed and a company annihilated. To-morrow a catch will be released and half a city will be wrecked. Under such conditions talk of freedom is a mockery. Science, dehumanised science, has us all in chains, and the world cannot be safe for democracy until its work is pursued for, and subordinated to, some tolerable ethical end.[1]

From this point of view the failure of the Hague Conventions to withstand the onslaught of the very circumstances which they were intended to control was among the most disastrous consequences of the war. The checks which civilisation believed it had imposed on the terrific instruments of its own devising provided a little work for the casuists who sought to palliate the indifference with which they were thrown aside; otherwise they fulfilled no function whatever. In this regard the war left a much more barbarous world than it had found —a world patently unable to control its own criminal tendencies. Nor has the Treaty of Versailles in any way mended the rent in the moral law of civilisation. Germany is, indeed, rendered powerless to repeat her crimes; she is deprived

[1] Even the leaders of science defy the moral law by disclaiming responsibility for their acts. "All that science does, however, is to discover certain powers. It remains for the politicians to deal with those powers and to decide . . . whether they will be turned into engines of betterment or engines of destruction."—Sir Oliver Lodge interviewed in the *Evening Standard*, 28/8/20.

of her submarines and aeroplanes, and a rigid watch is to be kept over her factories. But the remedy for the evil thing in human nature disclosed by the war is an appeal to the human conscience. At the very least the law must be stated in emphatic terms; at the very least all law-abiding forces must be rallied round it. Of this " very least " the treaty falls lamentably short. Some expression of the high moral indignation which inspired the Grand Alliance is found in the 227th article indicting the ex-Kaiser for his outrage on civilisation. But no court exists—we must face the fact that under present conditions no court can be constituted —competent to hear such an indictment; and the State which harbours the criminal has been able to cite ethical considerations of some weight in support of its refusal to give him up. The succeeding article, under which proceedings will be taken against other war-criminals, has been whittled down to an instrument for the punishment of those guilty of peculiar atrocities, repugnant not to the Hague Convention but to the criminal law. It provides that the uniform shall not cover murder, torture, rape, arson, and theft.

There must be many who regret the total failure of the treaty, and the almost total failure of its abridged second edition, the Washington Agreement, to enact a code of conduct whose breach

not even war shall exonerate, and to offer this code to civilisation to be sanctioned by a pledge to punish its breach by force of arms. But the omission does not necessarily imply a blunted moral sense on the part of the authors of the treaty. Rather they recognised that the events of the previous five years had stripped war of its last shred of chivalry, and had made it clear that henceforth war meant utter lawlessness. This fact, with its consequences to civilisation, has been handed over in all its stark ugliness to the consideration of the League of Nations, possibly in the hope that it may promote that unanimity of action upon which the Covenant optimistically relies for the prevention of future wars. In any case the present has abdicated its responsibility for this problem, and has committed its solution to the future—with what result the future alone can say.

With the second outstanding quality of modern thought the authors of the treaty have made a determined attempt to grapple. They have appreciated it as essential to determine very precisely the part to be played by the idea of nationality in the world of to-morrow, and have even allowed for the possibility that the constructive thought of to-morrow will handle it in a revolutionary spirit. At first sight it would appear, indeed, that the victory of the Allies marked the final triumph of

the national idea and the final collapse of the militarist conspiracy to subvert its sovereignty. It was our boast during the war that we were an alliance of free nations, our pledge that nations enslaved would find in us their champions. From Belgium to Arabia, nationality was our battle-cry. Italy, Serbia, Rumania were to be made whole at last. The great historical crime of the partition of Poland was to be undone, the long dispersed Jewish race once more united. All these undertakings have been made good, and made good so utterly that only in Russia is victorious nationalism challenged in another idiom than its own. Agitation in India and rebellion in Egypt traced their birth to the declared war-aims of British statesmen, while revolutionary Ireland appealed for support to the Great Power which was Britain's chief ally in holding the seas for the ships of all civilised nations, and for sympathy to the small oppressed peoples who drew strength and confidence from Britain's present aid or promised succour.

It was, indeed, a commonplace of all Western and Westernised politics that the world which the victors would make, so far as they were free to make it, would be a world in which all nations, great and small, should be secure, and no people would seek to glorify itself by holding its weaker neighbours in fee. In this sense the allied triumph

left nationalism omnipotent. So fast, however, has opinion moved since the armistice that the whole of the foregoing argument may be challenged. Our modern men of vision take no note of a future in which science will be subordinate to ethics, but curdle our blood with prophecies of a next war more packed with horrors than the last. It is urged in reply that the next war will be made impossible by the League of Nations—an argument which clearly involves some limitation of the sovereignty of nationalism. It is, therefore, pertinent to present further evidence that the Grand Alliance did not fight merely to attain certain geographical war-aims but to humanise science and to exalt nationalism. Only when this is proved can the more recent tendencies of constructive thought be properly appreciated.

Proof enough is afforded by the very origins of the war. It was the sentence of death on two small nations—Serbia and Belgium—which compelled two of the three Powers comprising the Triple Entente to take up arms. National aspirations account for the subsequent accession of Italy and Rumania. A moral impulse carried America out of the neutrality which had for so long reflected the divided sympathies of her people. It may be retorted that belligerents always make play of high sounding motives, but really fight for hard facts

which are not far to seek. For example, supremacy in the Balkans was the undoubted prize of victory in a struggle between Russia and Austria, and equally material objects were at issue between the other warring States—Alsace-Lorraine between France and Prussia, Trieste and the Trentino between Italy and Austria, and Belgium and Asia Minor between Britain, insular and imperial, and Germany. The retort leaves unanswered the wider question why these various Powers should be antagonistic at all. Why should these rivalries present themselves as bones of contention and not as fields of agreement? For a whole year of the war this question was definitely before the peoples of the Grand Alliance. From the time when Germany, after her spectacular triumph over Rumania, publicly announced her readiness to enter into peace negotiations, to the time when the Allies, after the Bolshevist Revolution and the Caporetto disaster, finally steeled themselves to meet and counter the further blows impending in the west, it would have been possible to arrange some sort of compromised peace. The first hot-blooded enthusiasm for war had long since cooled, and all the allied peoples realised the sufferings involved in obstinate adherence to their ideals. But though Turkey and Bulgaria were notoriously weary of the war, though the young Hapsburg sovereign

was grasping at every possibility of saving his throne, though Germany herself was willing to barter concessions in the West for compensations in the East, and though the President of the United States himself explored the opportunities of mediation, allied opinion saw to it that peace projects did not pass beyond the stage of subterranean diplomatic intrigue. During the latter part of 1917 the nationalism whose strength forbade all talk of compromise would have stated its position somewhat thus:—The small Powers that are contained in the Alliance must survive, and must survive free and with every prospect of freedom, if nationality is not to lose all potency and meaning and be degraded into a respectable label for imperialistic agglomerates of the mediæval type. The preservation in undimmed dignity and estate of the Greater Allies is equally indispensable. Russia, for all her internal misgovernment, definitely stood out in her foreign relations as the champion of the freedom of the Southern Slav peoples against their conquerors; and it was the flagrant contradiction between its external and internal policies that finally brought the old régime toppling down in headlong ruin. France has gloriously proclaimed the first principles of democracy to the whole of Europe, has made them the motto of her Government, and even when she seemed to abdicate them

to the genius of Napoleon, nevertheless scattered them about the continent as seeds that sprang to sudden fruit in 1848. Italy, as the one great Power whose unity is still incomplete, gives the lead to national aspirations throughout the Mediterranean world. Japan has transformed herself by adopting Western nationalism, and has exalted it by leavening it with the mystical ideals of her feudal period. America has welded men of every race into a new national system embracing half a continent. Above all, Britain has first pointed the way to the League of Nations by converting her Empire into a union of free peoples, each with a strong national consciousness of its own. The process of conversion is admittedly incomplete, but those who in Ireland or India or South Africa or Quebec call attention to its sporadic imperfections do a most profound disservice to their own ideal, in that they are weakening the most potent instrument for its realisation that statesmanship has yet devised.

All this was perceived and admitted by thoughtful men throughout the Alliance, pacifists [1] not excepted. If the pacifist minority was nevertheless busy with

[1] Philological pedantry would expunge pacifist in favour of pacificist. But the shorter form seems to have established itself in the language, partly because of its shortness, partly because its sound suggests misleading but illuminating kinship with a passive attitude of mind. Indeed I once came upon "passivist" in a *Times* parliamentary report.

policies of negotiation, that was because it held that the national ideal was already safe; that it had triumphed by virtue of its firm resistance to attack; and that henceforth it could be trusted to assert itself universally over men's minds without seeking, through bloodshed, material expression of its sovereignty. The bellicose majority met this argument by pointing to the characteristics of the enemy Powers at war with us. The greatest of them was founded on the application of a non-moral science, called by its votaries *Kultur*, and its vassal-allies existed through and for the negation of nationalism. Austria-Hungary and Turkey had endured for centuries by denial of national ideals, the difference between the two Powers being that while Turkey had denied them casually and negligently, with occasional intervals of massacre to correct the consequences, Austria had sought to stifle them under the material excellence of her administration. The difference was of great practical importance; but it was theoretically insignificant, amounting only to the fact that in Turkish territory the impulse to a national rising had to come from without, whereas in the Austrian Empire it could be generated within.[1] Both

[1] Ignoring this point, English classical Liberalism has combined Austria and Turkey in a common hatred, and Mr. Gladstone once went so far as to make a speech, to the considerable embarrassment of the Foreign Secretary of the day, in which he challenged his hearers to point to a spot on the map and say, " Here Austria did

Powers had become anachronisms; both were obstacles, the one pathetic, the other disgusting, to the organisation of a world of homogeneous national States. As for Bulgaria, it was deplorable, though in view of the bad examples on either flank scarcely surprising, that the wrongs done her in the second Balkan war had driven her to thoughts of a vindictive hegemony instead of to a just re-assertion of her rights as a nation among nations. Those rights would nevertheless be assured to her.

Thus opinion in 1917; yet even in 1917 there was talk of a League of Nations, and when victory was at last achieved the hopes of mankind seemed to centre in the League, and the hearts of dwellers in war-stricken Europe went out to President Wilson when he crossed the Atlantic bearing with him, as was popularly but erroneously supposed, the draft of a scheme by which these hopes would be

good." Had Austrian pride deigned to take up the challenge it could have pointed to Galicia and Bosnia. Unlike either Russian or Prussian Poland, Galicia was a tolerably contented and certainly outspoken province before the war, while the magnificent administrative work of Kallay in Bosnia will bear comparison with Lord Cromer's work in Egypt. It may seem unfair that a Power with such a record should be bracketed with Turkey and her tale of apathy and tyranny; and it is indeed the tragedy of Austria that the material prosperity of her rule should have done so much to generate—first in Italy and now in Bosnia—the national spirit which made her rule detestable. But in fundamentals—and war deals with fundamentals—the classical Liberal view is sound. In spite of the institution of local Diets—precarious bodies which, in Croatia at least, were dissolved as soon as they assembled—Austria remained to the last the same narrow Germano-Magyar Empire into which she transformed herself after 1866, and never aspired to the perhaps impossible accomplishment of a union of free peoples after the British pattern.

realised. In the weeks before the Peace Conference assembled there was much talk of what the League of Nations was to be, and, though opinion did not crystallise, it evidently did not contemplate an institution limited by the literal interpretation of the name. What was intended was some authority composed no doubt of nations, but definitely above nations, and the reactionaries who clung to an uncontrolled and uncontrollable nationalism based their objections to the League on this very ground. They were, however, in a clear minority. The opinion which backed the League and in the end created it, though with many concessions to nationally-minded statesmen, envisaged some sort of world-State and accepted the Covenant, in spite of disappointment with its provisions, as the germ from which such a State might eventually evolve. The French mind, with characteristic logic, was profoundly aware of the distinction between a mere conference of sovereign States and a new synthetised authority with force at its back; and French interest in the League waned after the rejection of M. Leon Bourgeois's proposal to provide it with some sort of armed sanction. This is a remarkable phenomenon. No people in Europe have so strong a national sense as the French. So intense is their feeling that all through the war *La France*—the French national idea—

was personified as an heroic figure hideously maimed, whom Frenchmen by their own sacrifice might restore to her pristine beauty. Yet after the peace Frenchmen, above all others, cherished the idea of some supreme authority dowered with actual as well as with moral force, so that in the logical last resort France herself might be coerced by it.

The paradox is explained by the fact that ideas provide their own antidote. It is dangerous for one way of thought utterly to possess the human mind. Life involves a perpetual compromise between contradictions, and virtue lies in the mean. This great truth is eternally rejected by the ardent young spirits of every generation but is accepted by the sober opinion of mankind in the mass. Hence, when an idea triumphs, as nationalism triumphed in this war, it at once becomes suspect. Its weaknesses are analysed and a counter-idea is begotten out of them, much as the method by which Germany conducted her war created the spirit which brought her to defeat. The upshot of this war brought nationality, which a hundred years ago was an aspiration rather than a fact in most parts of Europe, to the topmost pinnacle of achievement. At once down it crashed, though it threw out, as will be seen, a stay to break its fall which would else have imperilled the political

fabric of civilisation. The League of Nations was thus born out of triumphant nationalism to be its negation and counterpoise. Nationalism met the challenge promptly, and largely nullified the institution which it was compelled to accept.

The actual character of the Covenant of the League was well analysed by the Dutch Government on receipt of an invitation to subscribe to it. It was a League of the victorious nations pledged to maintain the settlement they had imposed. In the Dutch view a neutral who accepted the invitation to join the League endorsed the terms of the peace, the more so as the Central Powers were temporarily excluded from membership. This severe criticism was contained, however, in a memorandum accompanying a Bill authorising the adhesion of Holland. The Dutch Government disliked the League as it was, but proposed to join it for the sake of what it might become. Most of its strongest supporters similarly look to what it may become. In its present form, with its pledge to maintain the territorial integrity of its members and its insistence on absolute unanimity in its decisions, it seems to degrade itself to a mere mutual insurance, a device for overcoming the suspicions which the weak ever cherish against the strong, and—less significant still—to a mere mechanism for effecting that reduction of armaments which, in any event, the

exhausted Great Powers will not long be able to maintain at their old level. But those who with more penetrating vision find in the establishment of the League some real guarantee that even the horror and agonies of the war will not have been endured in vain, are not so purblind as to attach exaggerated hopes to a new lubricant of the old international machine. Rather they discern in the League the framework of a new machinery which will work smoothly where the old creaked and cracked and finally broke down. For the world is now faced with the disastrous consequences of its system of thought. These four centuries we have acted and believed in terms of nationality. And at last, when the peoples were ranged against one another in millions, when Mother Earth was soaked as never before in the blood of her sons, the spirit which prompted the infliction and endurance of this slaughter was the very spirit of nationality, the lamp of progress in whose hand was thus monstrously changed into the torch of death. Shadows we may be and shadows we may pursue, but from this ghastly paradox there must be some escape. Civilised humanity, finding its own weapons turned against itself, must achieve some higher synthesis or perish.

Nothing is more conservative than the human mind. It involves internal struggle as well as

external turmoil to break away from familiar modes of thought. But it must be realised that the last chapter is now in the writing of the fourth volume of the political history of Europe. Volume one holds the glorious record of the Greek City State, and even the spacious mind of Aristotle, viewing the Greek world when Alexander was establishing a wider conception, failed to realise that it could ever be transcended. Then came that matchless period of political education, the Roman Empire, to be followed by the dim theocracy of the Middle Ages. The upheavals of the renaissance and the reformation stripped Empire and Papacy of their predominance, and the world entered on its fourth phase, the epoch of nationalism. The idea of nationality has rendered one great service to mankind. Out of it democracy was born. A people which regarded itself as nothing but the creature of a dynasty could never become self-conscious; but a people which the national idea had inspired with a sense of the supreme value of a common speech, common institutions, common ideals, cannot be baulked of its unity and its power. It is by and through nationality that democracy has struggled to political expression.

But at what a cost! In feudal times a nation in arms would have been an impossibility. It was of the essence of feudalism that each holder of land

looked up to some superior as his overlord and was pledged to render him personal service, and by this tie king and nobles and followers were united in the wars of the Middle Ages. But the system was incomplete; the urban communities stood conspicuously apart from it in practice as they were incompatible with it in theory. Moreover, its subtle and minute gradations excluded the sense of equality which is an element, though admittedly a fluctuating element, of the democratic consciousness. It is not an accident that the first truly democratic army that the modern world has known was gathered together in fifteenth century Bohemia, when a common tongue, uttering a common creed, first expressed a policy that may fairly be called national. The delicate precedences of the feudal hierarchy were at once swept away and a nation in arms supported a nation's will. The infant democracy, forced to fight or suffer extinction, was duped and threatened and bullied into silence for another century and more. But at least it bequeathed to posterity the fruitful and dangerous tradition that an armed people constituted a most formidable foe. From Hussite times, through the religious wars to the French Revolution, and from the Revolution until now, continental democracy has always been conscious of its armed strength, and perhaps too ready to appeal to it. It has been

by nature intolerant of obstruction, and at times it has felt most truly itself when in arms. Only a democratic way of thought can make conscription possible, for conscription in Germany before the war rested on popular approval as surely as it so rested in Britain and America during the war. The Germans are the most aggressive, the most backward, and the most hybrid of national organisations, but even they felt that it was in the name of Germany and not of William or Hindenburg that they might be bidden to obey and suffer in all things. As their song has it, "Deutschland über alles," and Deutschland, it should be remembered, is almost an abstract idea, quite lacking the geographical definiteness of Britain or France or Italy.

Democracy, then, as we have known it as yet, is militant, and national—militant because it is national, because the clash of national aspirations so inevitable in this congested, problematic Europe of ours, drives it to arms. The ideas which have evoked it have now proved its own undoing, and a world made safe for democracy in its transient, contemporary sense would be a world of jealousies blazing up into perpetual conflicts. Democracy must be saved from itself, turned to other ways of thought and action than scientific destruction and national ruthlessness. In the League of Nations lies safety.

Yet the League of Nations is in peril, and in peril from the very quarter which most emphatically asserted the necessity of its establishment. Without America the framework of the League lacks one of its main props, and America holds aloof. For the first thirty months of the war America watched the conflict in Europe, not indeed with entire detachment, for from the first it was apparent that she might be involved, but with that impartiality which came of a doubt as to which side she might ultimately join. The spaces of the Atlantic give perspective, and American opinion adopting that curious half-visionary, half-patronising tone which it reserves for its treatment of European affairs, moralised upon the tragedy of the war. Europe was an aggregate of nations. Its strength, for which at first America entertained no exaggerated respect, was the sum of the strengths of its nations. This strength was now being turned against itself, and Europe was in fact possessed by a frenzy of self-destruction. Such uncontrollable and suicidal passions must be checked, and could only be checked by restraining the spirit of nationalism within bounds. Hence came the concept of a League of Nations, which in an early phase styled itself, appropriately enough, the League to enforce peace.

American vision was clear, but it owed its clarity

to the fact that America did not view the situation through the fog of any strong national consciousness of its own. American patriotism is, of course, demonstrative enough. Even De Tocqueville, writing two generations ago, found it necessary to warn his readers against allowing an American to talk about his country. But European observers always shook their heads about these spectacular manifestations. If the flag really meant so much, why shout over it? And if American nationalism was so clear-cut, how could America absorb such an enormous foreign element? Signs were not wanting before the war that the very vocal Americanism of America was something of a convention. The German and Irish elements of the community remained conspicuously German and Irish, and, when the Balkans blazed up, immigrants from South-Eastern Europe, who had been received with a certain contemptuous tolerance, began to return home to fight. Good Americans expressed some apprehension of this movement. The Slav immigrants, it was hinted, had left their homes because their national aspirations could find no scope, and had crossed the Atlantic, partly no doubt in search of El Dorado, but partly because there was no country which demanded so slight a modification of outlook on the part of its naturalised citizens. The truth of this analysis has become

more apparent than ever since the war, when Americans have returned by the hundred thousand to take their place in the nations which the peace has freed from their long oppression and summoned to an independent existence.

The temper of America was fully and most illuminatingly displayed during the first two years of the war. It would appear that indigenous opinion was mainly on the side of the Allies, as was only to be expected, since the United States was born of the union between the traditional culture of England and the political philosophy of France. But this opinion was swamped. The neutrality of the United States was the result of the divided sympathies of her inhabitants who supported this side or that according to their racial affinities. Their actual citizenship was used to justify their neutrality, but their partizanship was determined by their blood. In Britain this attitude occasioned no particular surprise. Britain has always criticised America with special leniency on the ground that her real national characteristics have not yet emerged. Before the war, and for that matter to-day also, acts have been done in America which would be regarded as unfriendly if committed in the bosom of a truly national State. What would be the fate, for example, of our friendship with France if the " President " of the " Irish

Republic" were welcomed as such at the Hotel de Ville in Paris? The welcome actually given him in New York was only casually noticed in the English Press. Only casual notice was required. It was all a very quiet affair; just a friendly gathering of Irishmen. Similarly when a great Nonconformist divine went from Birmingham to New York, and returned from New York to London, English opinion did not conclude that the differences between the two nations had become insignificant. It simply noted that Dr. Jowett could easily remain an Englishman all the time. Nor when another Nonconformist divine went to San Francisco, changed his citizenship and became foul-mouthed[1] towards England, was he treated as a spokesman of American feeling. He was simply a renegade Englishman.

Episodes such as these are worth a passing glance because the tolerant British attitude which they illustrate cannot be maintained much longer. Whatever America may have been in 1914, she had developed a strong national consciousness in 1917. Her best citizens then coined the illuminating description—100 per cent. Americans. Europe has no stock of percentage nationals. Her goods are either patriots or renegades, and America

[1] I mean, of course, politically foul-mouthed. Men like Aked never use a big, big D.

is evidently determined that her citizenship, too, shall henceforth be valued at par. British opinion is fully alive to this development, and is eager to gain American friendship now that the epithet is acquiring a definite meaning. Though American troops have carried a good account of Britain to every corner of the Union, though the official relations between the two countries are better than they have ever been since the Spanish-American war, the future is watched with some anxiety on this side of the Atlantic. The fact that the total voting strength of the British Empire is regarded as a serious objection to American adhesion to the League of Nations has been noted with deep regret. The arrangement was welcomed in Britain because it proclaimed to the world the status of the British Dominions in the Empire; but modified it must somehow be if modification is the price of America's goodwill.[1]

But the six British Empire votes are not the barrier which excludes America from the League. The barrier has been set up by America herself.

[1] "The amount of ignorance which prevails is rather distressing. I have met educated Americans who actually believe that, on the Council of the League, England will have six times the voting power of the United States and can order America to send troops to Mesopotamia."—Sir J. Foster Fraser in the *Evening Standard*, 11/8/20.

Educated Englishmen may view with some apprehension the power of the United States, in the Assembly of the League, through her control of the votes of Cuba and of the Central American Republics, but they do not believe that she can order British troops to Mexico.

American nationalism is still too recent and too self-conscious to accept the least hint of control. America has just fought a second war of independence, and has emerged from it a nation. The fact has changed her attitude towards her sister nations. It was her former habit to judge them, with an outspokenness not always tactful, as entities narrower and more exclusive than herself. Now she puts herself at their side, makes a more precise comparison, and notes her own distinctive qualities with emphatic approval. At this critical stage of her political thought she is invited to cast aside her new pride and to enter a League of Nations as the exact equal of the other Great Powers. Her young nationalism takes the alarm. It feels that it has its lesson to teach the world first. It wants to show that it can escape the pitfalls from which other nations look to the League to safeguard them. They demand the League because their nationalism has ended in bloodstained failure; but America should not fetter herself by the League while her nationalism is still moving towards the climax of its success.

Such at any rate is the European view of the supreme and most melancholy paradox of our time —the threat to the hope of civilisation by the very Power from which that hope got its strongest impulse. There is a moving passage in *In Memoriam*

where Tennyson expresses his fear that his friend for whom he yearns will move unattainably beyond him, always a lifetime ahead. Is Europe always to move ahead of America? Is she to be a generation before her in appraising the weakness of nationality as she was a generation before her in exterminating the vice of slavery? Must the progress of all mankind limp because the New World lags behind the Old? Belief in the future of mankind, and a confidence, justified by history, in the American quality of vision forbid a pessimistic Yes.[1]

[1] Science would, indeed, indicate the conclusion that there is something in American conditions of life which not only discourages progress but encourages retrogression. "The family of the Simiadæ," Darwin explains in the sixth chapter of his *Descent of Man*, "is divided by almost all naturalists into the Catarhine group, or Old World monkeys, all of which are characterised (as their name expresses) by the peculiar structure of the nostrils, and by having four pre-molars in each jaw; and into the Platyrhine group of New World monkeys (including two very distinct sub-groups), all of which are characterised by differently constructed nostrils, and by having six pre-molars in each jaw. Some other small differences might be mentioned. Now man unquestionably belongs, in his dentition, in the structure of his nostrils, and some other respects, to the Catarhine or Old World division; nor does he resemble the Platyrhines more closely than the Catarhines in any characters, excepting in a few of not much importance and apparently of an adaptive nature. It is, therefore, against all probability that some New World species should have formerly varied and produced a man-like creature with all its own distinctive characters. There can consequently hardly be a doubt that man is an offshoot from the Old World Simian system; and that under a genealogical point of view he must be classed with the Catarhine division." "But," continues Darwin a couple of paragraphs later, "every naturalist who believes in the principle of evolution will grant that the two main divisions of the Simiadæ, namely the Catarhine and Platyrhine monkeys with their sub-groups, have all proceeded from some one extremely ancient progenitor"; and, according to Darwinian doctrine this progenitor would appear as a link between the two modern types, the Old World branch having varied towards, and the New World branch away from, the human form. All this is very discouraging, but science is not an infallible guide in political matters.

So confused and fluctuating is the general situation nowadays that contradiction in policy may well be the make of consistency in principle. America is now possessed by a spirit of militant, self-conscious, uncompromising nationalism which rejects even such feeble limitations as would be imposed by membership of a League of Nations whose decisions are only binding when unanimous. But suppose that the whole doctrine of nationality were challenged, suppose that there came into being somewhere in the world a system of political thought which denied the claim of nationality to be the sovereign type of political association, and which proposed to substitute some other doctrine of the State, not only different from, but incompatible with, the now dominant classification of mankind into governments organised nationally. Would not America be most sensitive to the challenge, would she not contend that the maintenance of the present order was the common concern of all nations, would not the tradition of her own origins urge her to the task of consolidating them all for the purpose of mutual insurance and defence? The very pride of nationhood which bids America hold aloof from a League of Nations in a world in which nationality is triumphant would make her the mainstay of such a League in a world in which nationality was fighting for its

life. The contingency is by no means remote. It is definitely raised by the consolidation of the Soviet Power. An acute observer has said that the new Russia is something of a State, whereas the old was merely a government; but Russia is as little a nation under the new State as under the old government. Can a League composed of States professing themselves nations accommodate a State which repudiates that title as a plausible alias of capitalism, and, therefore, abhorrent to its own constitution ?

It is one of the curiosities of the Covenant of the League that it contains no attempt to define a nation—wherein its authors showed more wisdom than courage, for a satisfactory definition is exceedingly hard to come by. Historically, a nation may be defined with rough accuracy as the political result of community of race, religion, language, and institutions among the inhabitants of a tolerably distinct area. The case of Ireland at least shows that a nation does not come into being when one or more of these essentials is conspicuously wanting. But when the want is not conspicuous, and other circumstances are favourable, a nation forms itself out of imperfect elements. England, for example, forced upon herself by her insularity, evolved a common tongue and a common political method, which in turn

forced her divers races into a nation. Germany, again, saw her national unity jeopardised by the sharp separation of her religious elements, but a German nation emerged from the Napoleonic wars. The development of Italian nationalism was checked by diversity of institutions, and might, indeed, have been stifled but for the unifying tradition of Imperial Rome. Thanks to external pressure Belgium and Switzerland have achieved nationhood in face of the absence of a common tongue; in the United States, on the contrary, language, backed by a political tradition, has been the vital nation-making factor. The League may one day find itself in difficulties for its want of precision in the use of a term of such varied historical antecedents and such uncertain actual significance. But perhaps it was prudent to let sleeping dogs lie. Too many alleged nations had sent their delegates to Paris for the conference to be able to philosophise in comfort. It is, however, possible to infer the external tests to which a nation must conform if it is to qualify for admission into the League. Its government, the organ through which it will express itself in the Assembly or on the Council of the League, must be organised upon a popular basis. Governments resting upon the supremacy of a military caste are thus definitely excluded. But in what way a government must derive its authority

from the people is left a moot point. To the average European, indeed, the question is easy enough to answer. The constitutional system adopted by all the European members of the League is that of the full responsibility of the executive to a legislature elected upon a broad franchise. The case for the exclusion of Soviet Russia from the League rests on the fact that its government does not satisfy this test. But neither does the government of the United States. American political thought differs from European chiefly in this that it links its executive directly with the sovereign people and, therefore, frees it from responsibility to the legislature. Since all powers of the executive are centred in one individual who is practically irremovable during his term of office, the American system appears to European eyes as tinged with rather dangerous possibilities of autocracy, and it is just as well—again, of course, from the European point of view—that in its international relations the American executive is definitely subordinate to one branch of the legislature There exists, however, between the two authorities an hiatus, overcome in European States by the parliamentary system, with the consequence that the responsible American legislature cannot influence policy though it must confirm or reject its results. This circumstance has recently involved

Europe in considerable inconvenience. The suggestion does not, however, appear to have been made that America should be excluded from the League until she has brought her constitution into harmony with general democratic practice, nor even that she should be represented by her Senate instead of by her executive government—a proposal for which perhaps there is something to be said. But if America be admitted, how can Russia be excluded? The Russian government, like the American, speaks directly in the name of the people, and like the American, though with more thoroughgoing logic, uses its popular sanction as a ground for dispensing with responsibility to an elected legislature. But how, on the other hand, can Russia be admitted without destroying that homogeneity which the very conception of the League involves? The Soviet State is a class State; a national State is a comprehensive union of classes.

To this dilemma America cannot be indifferent. She cannot hold aloof from the League and leave it to solve the Russian enigma as best it can. Action is forced upon her by the very fact that her national consciousness is to-day so strong and was yesterday so weak. No European country has dealt equally drastically with Bolshevist sympathisers within its borders; but no European country has had equal cause for drastic action. The history of

Bolshevism cannot yet be written, but already it is clear that the movement was not born of the war, however much it may have been quickened by it. Bolshevism aims at the destruction of capitalism by violence, and for years before the war this aim had been avowed and pursued in America by the International Union of the World's Workers. There were many circumstances which caused the agitation to germinate on American soil. The country's nationalism was only skin-deep. Its proletariat was a medley of races in haphazard economic juxtaposition. Indeed, it may be doubted whether, for all the genius of Marx, the idea of an International would have gained much ground in Europe but for the exemplar of its actual working in America. Again, the country was in the later stages of a phase of headlong economic development. In the Europe of the later nineteenth century capitalism was an established institution; but in America it was an aggressive force, sucking in its human material at New York, and ejecting it over the whole breadth of a continent as the instruments of its triumph over the wild. Further, there was nothing in the social structure of the country to mask or modify the domination of capital. Except to a slight and diminishing extent in the Southern States, the fabric of American society is not strengthened by castes holding a definite

position with the corresponding obligations. Plutocracy obtains, and its quality is the more conspicuous because a majority of its members owe their wealth to their own efforts and not to inheritance. In a word the organisation of the American State was national only in name, but capitalist in substance.

The war has transformed America. The national element has asserted itself with overwhelming force, and even a Bolshevist can hardly contend nowadays that the American State is nothing more than the sum of its millionaires. What he contends is that it has taken the millionaire under its protection, and has given a political prop to the capitalism which formerly stood alone. Accordingly an agitation formerly directed against economic developments with which the State professed itself but little concerned, is now turned against the State itself. American nationalism is thus openly challenged, and accepts the challenge the more readily because it feels that it was first attacked in its sleep. There is thus a nervousness and vigour about America's extirpation of Bolshevism rather puzzling to European peoples with their more mature national traditions. For the moment the American temper is not an article of exportation. It finds full scope at home. But precisely in so far as the national spirit secures itself from domestic

outrage it will be more and more concerned with the battle which nationalism is now fighting in Europe. The League of Nations is the citadel. Once Soviet Russia is admitted and can intrigue freely with the garrison the whole cause is betrayed, and America will be the last nation in the world to countenance its betrayal. For this reason the growth of the Soviet Power provides its own safeguards. Every stage in its progress draws America into more wholehearted championship of the League of Nations and whittles away those reservations in which Europe at first saw the death-blow to its hopes. The harmony of the world can only be secured in one of two ways—by the violent destruction of nationalism through the Soviets, or by its reasonable modification through the League. With the whole energetic influence of America inevitably destined to be thrown on the side of reason, the future of the League should be secure.

CHAPTER XII

LATIN, TEUTON: LATIN, SLAV

The German people, or peoples, hold an indeterminate and rather puzzling place in the history of nationalism. Their desire for unity was hampered by the fact that until 1866 the nominal headship of the German-speaking world belonged to the Hapsburg monarch at Vienna. But the Hapsburg monarchy had never been a genuinely Teutonic institution. It had been associated from its origin with the politics of Slav, Italian, and Magyar peoples. Its very name had long proclaimed its character. Until 1806 the Hapsburg at Vienna had been Holy Roman Emperor. It is true that the name had become an absurdity long before Voltaire assailed it with his gibes and Napoleon stripped it of its last shred of ornamental tinsel. From the time of the Thirty Years' War, perhaps even from the time of the Council of Constance, the Holy Roman Empire had been a fiction maintained by diplomatic courtesy. But the title embalmed a tradition which stretched back through Charlemagne to Roman times, and served to keep alive a political theory ecumenical and not national in

origin. The Hapsburg monarchy has always been true to itself. Born in a world that knew nothing of nations it has continually denied their existence until they incontinently destroyed it.

The survival of this institution confronted thoughtful Germans with a paradox that long stultified their political activity. On the one hand such German unity as existed appeared to be symbolised by the sovereign at Vienna; on the other hand the sovereign at Vienna was not a German sovereign. A Germany united under Austrian leadership was a contradiction in terms, and, as Bismarck ultimately saw, Germany required to be broken before organic union was possible. But the truth that the core of German unity must be sought outside Vienna had dawned on German minds before Bismarck. In 1848, the year which marks the birth of the Europe which endured until the outbreak of the war, a great German Parliament assembled in Frankfort. Its business was to unite Germany, and its failure ranks high among the tragedies of history. It reached the sound but in those days revolutionary conclusion that there was no hope of union through Austria. It therefore offered the crown of Germany to the King of Prussia. But a liberal monarchy was incompatible with Prussian Kingship, and Frederick William IV. declined the offer. His refusal

showed that for any democratic union there was as little hope in Prussia as in Austria, and there the problem stands to this day. It still remains to be seen among what section of the German people the aspiration towards a free German nationality will take its rise. Union of a sort, however, Prussia could offer and eventually achieved. In a memorable decade Bismarck carried through his long cherished purpose and left Germany united, but on a military instead of a democratic basis.

Circumstances made Bismarck's programme not only practicable but tempting even to German liberalism. For two centuries before his time German history had been a dismal record of suffering, broken only by the victories of Frederick the Great. Because Germany had been militarily contemptible it was on her soil that Europe had elected to fight out first its religious and then its political problems. The German people, reasoned Bismarck, has no prospect of developing its energies so long as it runs the risk of fresh overwhelming interruptions. It requires a strong shield behind which it can work out its destinies. Only the Prussian monarchy, the heir of the Frederician tradition, can provide such a shield. Thus Bismarck, and though more liberal minds than his perceived the dangers of his argument, they could not resist its

cogency when his policy confronted them with justificatory facts. Moreover, the fact that Bismarck's unity amounted to no more than a military federation enabled some difficult and perhaps insoluble problems to be evaded. The various German stocks differed profoundly in outlook. They had nothing in common except their speech. The Thirty Years' War had left a legacy of permanent religious dissension, and the multiplicity of governments which endured until Napoleon swept most of them on to the rubbish heap had rendered impossible any community of political thought. Even the sense of geographical unity which was so potent a factor in Italy was denied to the German peoples. They spread vaguely over the central European plain, and are even yet unconscious of definite frontiers. They were thus exposed to a variety of non-German influences which penetrated very subtly. On some of their neighbours—the Slavs beyond the Elbe—they imposed their authority. From others —the French beyond the Rhine—they received a laboratory of ideas. The rapid collapse of the hopes of 1848 at least indicated how long and arduous the path of organic union was necessarily to prove. That path has yet to be trodden, and therein lies the Germans' hope of escape from the terrible situation created for them by the war.

For the moment the German people are outcasts from civilisation. Yet civilisation cannot contemplate their perpetual exclusion. They are too numerous, too central, and too capable for their loss to be contemplated even amid the passions that war engenders. But they must give proof of good intent before they can be readmitted within the pale, and such proof would be given by a Germany which succeeded in transforming herself into a nation as democracy understands the term. In view of the diversities between the various Teutonic stocks, a German national State would necessarily be both comprehensive and assimilative. Its existence would be incompatible with that unsympathetic rigidity of thought which all nationalism engenders, and of which the peculiar British brand is distinguished by the epithet insular. Such a nation, strong in the essentials of nationality but destitute of its weakness, would be a pillar of an ecumenical League of Peoples, and might well become the typical element of the wider synthesis to which we all now aspire.

But these hopes are for the future. For the present we have to note that the leading German State gave coherence to the original military federation by imposing upon its members certain of its own peculiarities of thought. The process was conducted with what was, relatively speaking,

tact. Even during the war the Emperor, in his telegrams for internal consumption, did not speak of his subjects as one people, but laid stress on the co-operation of the various German stocks. But despite all regard for what the German called particularism—a sentiment respected by the Imperial constitution itself, and only gradually violated by forty years of administrative homogeneity—the growth of Prussian influence and methods which necessarily resulted from Prussia's predominant position caused occasional resentment; and South German newspapers, maintaining the tradition of what passed for liberalism across the Rhine, were wont to speak ironically of Prussia-Germany. In truth Germany became visibly more Prussian after the accession of William II. The ideas which made of the Prussian army the irresistible instrument which every good German was taught to consider it, were permeating the whole country, not only through the army itself—an agency far more universal than the citizens of a free community can realise—but through a code of centralised bureaucratic legislation.

The ideas so imposed are commonly, though perhaps not quite fairly, branded by the name *Kultur*. *Kultur* means a national system of political thought, and Prussian *Kultur* maintains that the unit of modern organised life is the nation, and

that, in its struggle for existence, the nation is not bound by any sanction, legal or moral, other than its own interests. This remarkable doctrine was first developed by Prussian Junkers seeking to impose a sense of citizenship on the dreamy Slav peoples east of the Elbe. Early in the eighteenth century it was erected into a principle of policy by Frederick William I., and its pre-eminence, despite its agrarian origin, in modern industrialised Germany is a little curious. It is due partly to the affinities of the Prussian monarchy, partly to the need of some aggressively cohesive doctrine to oppose the centrifugal tendencies of the divergent German stocks, partly to the lack of imagination and to the insistence on material results which distinguished the nineteenth century type of mind. Prussian *Kultur* is simply a restatement in national terms of the fly-blown sophism that justice is the right of the stronger, and as such requires no refutation, but may be left to collapse through its own inherent falsity. After all, civilisation and the impulses embodied in the word rest on the postulate that human progress is a process of betterment and not simply of change.

Prussian *Kultur* has, however, exhibited two novel and very menacing manifestations which went far to bring about the war and even farther to embitter its prosecution. In the first place it

promoted a sweeping and intolerant habit of mind. If once it be assumed that only the nation counts, it is but a step to judge peoples by their national institutions. In this spirit the Germans judged both France and Britain by their governments, although in France the government is weak because the French are not really interested in politics except during revolutions, while in Britain the government is the expression not of national sense but of party feeling.[1] These dangerous underestimates fostered the war fever, and though that fever is now doubtless appeased the same dogmatic and narrow spirit would have a dangerously disruptive influence on the League of Nations. The members of the League must be bound together by mutual respect, whereas the Prussian despises other *Kulturs* than his own just because they do not produce the results which he considers necessary.

In the second place Prussian *Kultur* was uniquely fitted to exploit the possibilities of modern science. No system of philosophy could have been more congenially disposed to the scientific mind. Like

[1] The converse error, that of judging nations by individuals assumed to be typical, is also committed by the Germans, trained as they are to conform to a pattern. So Professor Münsterberg, who ought to have known better, quoted the police-court chestnut of the woman who explained the scratches on her face as due not to the cat but to another lady in illustration of the general level of English *Kultur*. The learned Professor failed to perceive that, if his inference were sound, the story would not be retailed among Englishmen as a joke.

science, Prussian *Kultur* was unaffected by ethical considerations, and, like science, it desired results. It is not an accident that the German Empire was the citadel of applied science, and that the German chemical and electrical industries were unrivalled throughout the world. Still less is it an accident that these same principles of science were applied to war. Only in Germany was there nothing to check their application. It is sometimes urged that the German people must not be made responsible for the crimes of the German military party. It may or may not be the case that the German people willed the use of poison gas, the destruction of ancient monuments, and indiscriminate murder by aeroplane and submarine. They were not invited to approve of these methods, but neither did they protest against them, and they can demand no more favourable verdict than "not proven." But in any case the distinction thus drawn between the people and its commanders is utterly false. These ghastly degradations of warfare were the natural products of a system of thought of which the whole German people boasted, and to which they owed most of their commercial, industrial, and intellectual achievements of the last generation. These crimes were the result of the application by a particular set of experts of principles universally endorsed. The penalty for them must surely be

no less universal if the future of democratic peace is to be made secure.

Of these truths German opinion is still almost wholly uninformed. Occasional glimpses of them have been vouchsafed to independent minds, but the average German has not loosed his thought from the leading strings by which Kaiserism so long manipulated it. Perhaps the revelation has been too dazzlingly sudden. Four completed years of war found the German people with faith in their army still undimmed; another four months shattered it and left them pariahs in a world upon which they had hoped to impose their will. Perhaps, too, the habits of thought which have grown up for two generations cannot be broken in a trice. Yet it may be doubted whether these habits were stronger in 1918 than they were in 1806 when the shock of Jena destroyed them. But the breath of life was in German nationalism a century ago, and it is this breath which seems to have left it now. The world is shocked by glimpses of a Germany laughing and dancing, gambling and making merry, playing at militarism in the face of the Allies, playing at revolution in the proceedings of her Parliament, but nowhere honestly seeking to repair the mischief she has done, still less to root the lie out of her soul. With such a Germany there can be a paper peace, but no concord or co-operation.

And yet, and yet—if the world resolves to go on its way without Germany, the world as well as Germany will be the poorer. The Treaty of Versailles once signed, the Grand Alliance began to dissolve in spirit, not without recrimination. Was this because the architects of the Peace Treaty belittled the spirit which won the war? Have they imposed upon Germany terms so harsh as to be vindictive and not retributive? To these questions history will give her own dispassionate answers in her own time. But already they are causing much heart-searching, already their attempted enforcement has brought ugly consequences, and already it can be said that if they leave Germany broken but sullen, with her violence still sincere though impotent, they will have failed in their main purpose.

Once more, this is a topic on which the light of thought is necessarily befogged by the passion born of suffering. Who are we to judge the peace terms, we whose hearts tell us that no terms can be hard enough to meet the Germans' deserts? At best we can but peer dimly, straining for a glimpse of a future not for us, recalling the thought which was our mainstay in the darkest days, how we suffered that posterity might rejoice. In that spirit we can hope to ask ourselves, not unprofitably, what lesson it is that we are setting Germany to

learn. We have sought to warn her that she must abandon for ever all thought of exalting herself by domination over neighbours whose right to national life is as good as her own. That warning has been given. On the west and north Germany's frontiers have been traced, not unfairly, on ethnographical lines. The settlement on the east is less substantial, and the separation of East Prussia from Germany can scarcely be permanent. But the restoration of Poland worthily reflects the principles for which the Allies fought, and even on the east the settlement requires modification less in substance than in detail. Further, we have sought to wean Germany for ever from that passion for material success won by arms which has been her bane. Here, too, the Treaty of Versailles has done its work. There is no fault in the clauses which proclaim that blood and iron must never again be the instruments of German statesmanship. The fault is rather in the failure of the victors to read the same lesson to themselves. The effective limitation of armaments is among the pious aspirations of the League of Nations; a statesmanship wholeheartedly bent on organising world peace would have been more searching in its methods. Lastly, it has been enacted that the next generation of Germans shall devote their best energies to the repair of the material mischief

which this generation of Germans has wrought. The reparation clauses of the treaty are now admitted to be impossible of execution. But they were an attempt, in itself reasonable enough, to fix the price which Germany was surely bound to pay for an armistice granted her when her soil was yet inviolate, her industries still untouched, her material wealth unravaged. Another six months of war would have left Germany in the plight in which she herself left France. When the victors agreed to spare Germany it was clearly understood that they would themselves profit by their own act of mercy, and the Germans themselves were prepared for an enormous indemnity. What they did not anticipate, and what in their view the treaty unhappily inflicted, was an indefinite indemnity which their best exertions would only avail to increase. This is the plan which events have condemned as impracticable, but the case for reparations to the limit, now more definitely ascertainable, of Germany's capacity, has lost none of its force. The point is worth emphasis because British opinion, at one time extortionately severe, has now swung to the opposite extreme and become callously lenient.

There remains a greater problem. Half the wars which have afflicted Europe have arisen from Germany's struggle to attain an effective unity.

It is fair to say that this last war would never have been if such German unity as existed after 1870 had not been attained in the wrong way and had not even then been incomplete. In an evil day for Europe Bismarck invited his countrymen to agree to share loot on terms ; and in a still worse day for Europe William II. set himself somehow to incorporate Austria and all her appanages in the German system. Europe has made Germany disgorge her loot, which is all to the good; but, having stripped Austria of her Empire, she has left her in an isolation which is altogether evil. Now, as for so many centuries, Germany's final unity remains unachieved.

There must be a double movement, from without as well as from within. The wholly artificial separation between the Germans of the Rhine and the Germans of the Danube cannot possibly endure. It has been enforced, as a measure of precaution, in defiance of the instinct of nationality. The Government in Vienna starves amid its efforts to extend its authority beyond its own suburbs; the provinces will have none of it, and the Allies are wearying of their exertions to save the political bantling of their own creation from death by some infantile disease. Even if it take the form of mandatory protection on the part of a non-German Great Power, all economic assistance

must needs fail of its object of maintaining Austria's independence. Sooner or later, with Europe's goodwill or in spite of it, the whole mass of German-speaking peoples of Central Europe will gather themselves under one government.

The great obstacle is the Prussian tradition. Until they have themselves broken with it, the Germans cannot expect Europe to regard their strivings after unity with anything but misgiving. There is as yet no sign that Germany will free herself from Prussian domination. In this respect that new Republic is nothing but the old Empire. Not only has there been no real redistribution of influence, but Germany still mutters the old Prussian lie that she was attacked by an envious and treacherous world, and finds in the Peace Treaty evidence of its truth. Germany has yet to learn the meaning of political liberty, has yet to perceive that it is the only real foundation of a State. Since she has so conspicuously failed to teach herself that lesson, the world must teach it her. The final end of the peace—and the old philosopher was right enough in judging everything by its final end—is to convince Germany that she can best serve her own interests by abandoning the material means whereby she sought to gain them. But if those interests are themselves prohibited, the peace cannot point the true way to their realisation; and

until this fault is remedied, until the Germans themselves find offered them a place in a brighter and more genial sun than was ever perceived through her professors' spectacles and officers' monocles, the Allies will have failed to win that unqualified victory for which they fought and by which they hoped to transmit to future generations the assurance of free lives in a free world.

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Slav unrest began the war, and on the day that the last peace treaty was signed the Versailles settlement stood in peril through Slav unrest. This grim fact is matter for a whole volume of sermons on the vanity of human aspirations. In this, indeed, the meagre and sinister conclusion of so many sacrifices, such desperate efforts—that the European danger point has been shifted from Belgrade to Warsaw, from the valley of the Danube to the valley of the Vistula ? A pessimistic case can, indeed, be made out. Beneath and behind those permanent factors of European unrest, the Eastern and the Western questions, the disputes for the heritages of the extinct Eastern Empire and the extinct kingdom of Burgundy, there lies a less definite but no less constant element of disturbance, the ceaseless struggle of the Slav for an established place in Europe. In view of the immense stretch of European territory marked Slav on an

ethnographical map of the continent, it may seem a paradox to assert that the Slav has not yet won an established place within its confines. In fact, however, there is no paradox about it. The shape of Europe is such that its coastline is exceptionally great in proportion to its area, and this circumstance has made it seem natural and fitting to European peoples that each and all of them should possess full and secured access to the sea. Indeed, a desire to compress the whole movement of European history into one all-embracing phrase might be satisfied by some formula of the efforts of peoples migrating from the landlocked centres of Asia and Africa to adjust themselves to their new maritime environment. This adjustment has been accomplished by all the inhabitants of Europe except the latest comers, the Slavs. Of the non-Slav States of the continent only two—Luxembourg and Switzerland—lack a maritime outlet.[1] The exceptions prove the rule, for Luxembourg enjoys an accidental independence not compatible with economic freedom, while Switzerland has overcome her drawback, thanks to two special circumstances —her position in the heart of the continent's one great mountain system, and her easy access to

[1] Austria has now lost her coast—an additional argument against the isolation imposed upon her by the Treaty of Saint Germains. But she still has the Danube, and freedom of navigation upon it is secured by international guarantee.

three main avenues of passage to the sea, the Rhine, the Rhone, and the Danube. But so imperative is the sea sense among all good Europeans that it was not the least of Germany's grievances against this country that her position made her a barrier between the "German Ocean" and the real oceans beyond. The Slav has never reached the sea. But he aspires passionately towards the sea,[1] and his instinct tells him with complete truth that until he reaches it he will be a parvenu in Europe liable to conquest or to eviction. There is something very moving in the spectacle of the age-long struggles of the vast, ungainly Empire of the Tsars, groping like a blind giant for the warm water—struggles which were never more obstinate than in the century before the war. Everywhere the effort failed when success seemed sure. The Russ reached Petrograd but missed Dantzig; he reached Odessa but missed Constantinople; he sprawled over Central Asia to be headed off from the Persian Gulf; at last he stretched out a long tentacle and grasped Port Arthur, only to be forced within a decade to yield it to a maritime conqueror. The Russ is still so near and so desperately far. Petrograd, Archangel, and Vladivostok are windows on the Baltic, the White Sea, and the Pacific,

[1] A Slav of genius, Joseph Conrad, typifies the case of his people. Conrad has the sea-sense in overflowing measure—and has to express his feelings in English.

frosted over for months in the year. On the Norwegian side the Russian frontier is drawn within twenty miles of open water. Farther to the North-East the war has revealed the ice-free port of Murmansk, but the line of access to it runs across marshlands, and is only safe in winter. On the south, Odessa is open, but the outer approaches to it are controlled by other hands. For all her vast size, the mother-State of the Slavs is thus conspicuously an intruder into the European system, and is still as dissatisfied as ever with her ambiguous position.

The curse of the Russ has fallen upon other Slav peoples. Of the new States formed in the death agony of the Hapsburg Empire none has brighter prospects than Czecho-Slovakia. Only one difficulty clouds its future. It has no port, and there is no aspect of its foreign relations more anxiously studied by its government than the question of its right of approach to Trieste. Shakespearean irony rose to its highest inspiration when it equipped Bohemia with a sea coast—that sea coast whose absence forbids Bohemia to become a second Belgium. The Serb is in little better case than the Czech. The refusal of Austria to grant him his window[1] on the Adriatic led directly

[1] The window metaphor has passed into current use. But the Slav's real grievance is that he has been given a window when he wants a door.

to the European war, and the Jugo-Slavia into which Serbia has expanded chafes at its exclusion from Fiume. Of the other Slav States, Montenegro looked down for the full half century of its recognised existence on the black and yellow flag of Austria flying over the magnificent harbour of Cattaro; Bulgaria fought a continuous six years' battle, which has finally ended in defeat, to extort from Greece access to the Ægean and from Rumania a foothold in the Danube delta; and Poland, in the first moment of her independence, protested furiously against the wrong done her in the deprivation of Dantzig.

The upshot of the war has in no sense solved the Slav question. On the contrary, the Slav demands have become at once more insistent and less easy of satisfaction. Jugo-Slavia finds her more imperious claim for a window on the Adriatic resisted by an Italy which puts forward pretensions to an Adriatic sovereignty never asserted by Austria. Bulgaria, now more than ever an inland State, and reduced in size while her neighbours have received enormous accretions of territory, doubts whether a bare existence remains assured to her. Poland sullenly bids her creators note how gravely the perils of her position are enhanced by the inadequacy of the Dantzig corridor. The position of Russia has been most alarmingly

worsened. In the south the Soviet government, victorious elsewhere over its many enemies, has not yet fully overcome the challenge to its possession of the Black Sea litoral. In the north the secession of the coastal provinces has left Petrograd a window, the view from which has been partially blocked up with a revolutionary disregard for ancient lights. It is not surprising that Russia should feel that the whole world is against her, and should be lashing herself into a frenzy against the Powers banded together to refuse her lawful claims.

The war has not solved the Slav question; but it has transformed it. Before 1914 Slav ambitions were checked by Teutonic counter-aggression. It was Austria-Hungary which barred Serbia's access to her window in the Adriatic, and a hegemony over all the Slavs of the Balkans was the aim of the expiring effort of Hapsburg imperialism. Similarly, the expansion of Prussia which culminated in the partition of Poland had robbed Russia of the ice-free Baltic ports, and the Russian claim to eventual sovereignty at Constantinople was challenged by the steady growth of German influence in Turkey. To-day the Teutonic obstacles have been completely swept away. The Slav's way seaward is still blocked, but he now finds in his path a new and as yet scarcely apprehended figure—the Latin. This direct opposition between Slav and Latin has already

given a new turn to European politics, and it would be premature to conjecture in what way it will eventually be asserted or resolved. But the issue has been definitely raised—raised in so emphatic a form that it seems likely to occupy the attention of European statesmen for generations—and already a tendency in regard to its treatment has become apparent. The tendency may be arrested or may be developed in the slow process of historic time which exceeds the length of individual life, and often transcends the range of individual vision. But at least it may be noted for what it is worth. The tendency is for the Latin Powers to separate the Northern and the Southern Slavs, and to antagonise the former while coming to terms with the latter. In itself this action is not surprising. There are historic links which attach Latinism to Southern Slavdom through Greece, through Rumania, and, by the revival of a broken tradition, through Poland. These links are far more firmly tempered than the solitary attachment between the Latin world and Northern Slavdom—the Franco-Russian alliance, which was always a matter rather of business than of sentiment, and which has lost all power of influencing the future from the mere fact that France herself has taken the lead in bringing the new tendency to expression. French policy has aimed at interposing between Europe

and the new Russia a chain of buffer States. This policy springs from a deep appreciation of the meaning of the Slav claim to a definite place in the European fabric, and, drastic though it appears at first sight, it is of the nature of a compromise. It aims at definitely dividing the Slav movement, and seeks to include the Southern Slavs within the European system, and to thrust the Northern Slavs outside it by the negative means of withdrawing the continent's frontier some hundreds of miles westwards. It is noteworthy that the French attitude so precisely suits the Latin temperament that it has imposed itself upon Italy almost against her will. The Serb is a Southern Slav, and room on the coast must, therefore, be found for him according to the French thesis; but when the new Serbia first laid claim to Fiume Italy was beside herself with indignation. At first it seemed that nothing could check the torrent of popular feeling, and when a Latin fanatic established himself in the disputed port the situation became for a moment uncontrollable. The army and navy broke their allegiance, and in at least one Italian city there were processions headed by the Italian tricolour without the Royal Arms impaled upon its central panel. But the Italian Premier, Signor Nitti, maintained himself in office in spite of the popular frenzy, and it is most significant that his firm disregard

of the filibuster has been maintained by successors with very different conceptions of international affairs. This unanimity of view on the part of men of sharply contrasting political beliefs is due not so much to the influence of Paris as to the fact that all are Latins. The Adriatic question is, indeed, still unsolved, and its full solution may prove tedious and difficult. But the situation is steadily losing its venom, and the way begins to lie open towards a settlement in accordance with the French view.

Whether the French will be equally successful in the converse policy, and will end by creating a common antagonism between the Latin nations and the Northern Slavs is, of course, still more disputable; the Mediterranean Latins may well plead that they have no cause to oppose Slavs whose ambitions lie well beyond the orbit of their interests. But another turn of time's wheel may again bring the future of Constantinople into political prominence, for it is unlikely that the present emergency arrangement will pass smoothly into the accepted order of things. Let but the new régime in Russia identify itself with the most cherished aspiration of the Tsars and who shall say what Latin solidarity may mean ? But this much can safely be said, that if the Latin nations are ever ranged in battle against Russia, the British

will be their allies as surely as in the war with Germany. When that struggle comes, should it ever come, Russia will feel herself caught as in a vice between Western Europe and Southern Asia. Britain controls the Asiatic pincer, and Russia herself will force the two arms to act together. It may yet be that the alliance which the genius of Napoleon III. and of Cavour brought into being on the Crimean battlefields will prove the precursor of a more intimate union in a more desperate grapple. Such and only such must be the line of British policy if the Slav question ever comes to be fought out, whatever temporary perversions it may undergo before the question is fairly posed; so sure is it that in the long run a State's international conduct is governed by the elemental truths of its geographical position, and by the consequences that inevitably flow therefrom.

It is tempting to look a century ahead; but the amusement is always unprofitable, above all now when the present holds matter enough to pre-occupy the political sense. How comes it that France, which was the ally of Russia, and which extended so cordial a welcome to the first Russian revolution, should now outdistance even the United States in her uncompromising hostility to the Soviet régime? It is because she sees in the Russian revolution a formidable challenge to the very

source of her authority in Europe. Her emphatic attitude thus gives warning that the new antagonism between Slav and Latin is already more acute and more fundamental than the old antagonism between Slav and Teuton. So much follows, indeed, from the superiority of the French State over the German in the finish and subtlety of its composition. The German State was an organised authority founded on military discipline, spiritually little in advance of Sparta, of the ancient monarchies of the Near East, or even of Cetewayo's Zululand. But it was an expression of European thought, and as such the Russians, who are intruders into Europe, opposed it. They opposed it partly by indifferent imitation, partly by passive resistance, and Germany appreciated their opposition. Openly disdainful though she was of the Russians, she felt that their absorption into her own system could only be undertaken by very slow degrees. She realised that Frederick William II. had blundered in making the second and third partitions of Poland follow so closely on the first, and that, for all her triumphs, a century had not sufficed to digest that over-hasty meal. Accordingly, she treated the Russians with a contemptuous indifference, which was heartily reciprocated. The mutual attitude of the two peoples was perfectly consonant with the friendliest relations between the two courts, and the

Russo-German war broke out in 1914, not so much because smouldering hostility had at last been set ablaze, as because the military party, thirsting for easy victories, had decided that Russia was not worth the trouble of separating from France. But even in the intoxication of their apparent success, the soldiers remembered their lesson, and did not aspire to incorporate Russian Poland in the German Empire. The Baltic provinces, already more German than Russian, stood, of course, on a different footing.

Between France and Soviet Russia there can be no similar relations of easy-going incompatibility, separated though they are by half the width of Europe. Brought by the war into close touch with the higher forms of European civilisation, of which she had hitherto known little, and with her self-consciousness sharpened by defeat, Russia reacted against her circumstances with all the fury of her embittered soul. She had been the victim in the war of the nations; therefore her real enemy was not the Germans but this cruel European idea of nationality. But the idea of nationality is incarnate in France. It is her pride that she gave the astonished and indignant world the first terrific demonstration of its power. Her philosopher, Rousseau, first uttered the thought out of which modern nations are formed. The sovereignty of

the people, the rights of man, these are the principles which finally overthrew the feudal hierarchy with its kings by divine grace and its vassals whose whole duty was obedience. By application of these principles the citizen, while allowed to give the fullest scope to his individual talents, could yet feel himself an integral part of the State. It was France who first made apparent the real significance of the machinery painfully built up by the practical wisdom of the English, and revealed to the world the full glory of a Parliament. Inspired by universal suffrage, the State was transformed into the nation, and France offered Europe a practical philosophy of democracy. Her many experiments, if they did not issue in the same triumphant result, at least presented Europe with a choice of working models of political institutions, so that France became the examplar both of the theory and of the practice of national politics. Napoleon III. was right when he avowed himself at once the heir of the revolution and the apostle of nationalism. In a very real sense he was the saviour of society, whatever blunders he may have committed in the discharge of his redeeming mission ; and his career had a fuller intellectual influence on the founders of the Third Republic than they were willing to admit. But when the shock of war urged France to the defence and justification of

her place in Europe, she saw herself for what she was, saw her history since 1789 as all of a piece, saw her allies as to some extent her spiritual children. It was as the Mother-nation of the Western world that she stood in the forefront of the battle, and gathered round her one by one the self-conscious nations of both hemispheres. Her spirit became the soul of the Grand Alliance, the whole future of civilisation lay under her direction—and at the last moment when, after many agonies, the day of glory seemed surely about to dawn for the children of their country, behold, all that France was and all that France stood for was abruptly and pitilessly challenged from the East.

The texture of the Bolshevist anti-national philosophy is very thin. Its main threads are supplied by the writings of Carl Marx. Marx was himself a man of more heart than brain. As a thinker neither original nor profound, he was inspired by a lofty, moral indignation which drove him to reformulate the orthodox economics of the day in such terms as should point the way to remedies of the evils of which he was acutely and most honourably conscious. In a sense Marx's philosophy was a challenge to nationalism. It was intentionally and proudly international. But so is every philosophy; so in particular was the orthodox economic doctrine which Marx re-wrote. *Das*

Capital is not a systematic book. It is the sum of the work and thought of a lifetime, and its tone is naturally not altogether consistent. But the author's general doctrine seems to be no more than that there is an evil in the current economic practice which its victims should bind themselves together to redress. Marx was too good a thinker to propose the overthrow of a system of government without offering an alternative system in its place. His idea, at any rate in later life, was rather that his movement would spread and grow until governments themselves became possessed by it to the great betterment of society.

The fact that Marx offered no political doctrine has not deterred the Bolshevists from making a purely political use of his theories. Nor have they been at any particular pains to fill the gap to which their own acts have called such emphatic attention. It is true that they have formed a government themselves, but its philosophic sanction is of the flimsiest. Their argument is based upon the paradox, which is also a truth, that the national idea is unfair to the individual because it is too fair to the individual. By opening a career to the talents it not only offers the untalented no place except the gutter, but makes it certain that they shall be kept there. The under-dog can never rise, and his descendants will be under-dogs

after him. Accordingly Bolshevism addresses its appeal to the gutter. Its inhabitants are numerous and physically strong. Let them but disregard the conventions on which it rests and the system itself will collapse. The doors of the palaces stand open, and the under-dogs have only to enter and jump upon the tables. Against a strong government such an appeal would have had no chance of success. Even a weak government might have resisted it had there been a stable world to give it collateral support. But the appeal was made at a time when the Russian government, long notoriously inefficient, was visibly breaking down beneath the burden of a task utterly beyond its powers. How could such a government essay to fight Germany? Moreover, the world was in convulsion, and the foundations of its order were quivering. At such a moment success could be snatched, and was snatched in Petrograd. It still required to be exploited, and the hour brought the men. To what circumstances the leaders of the movement owed their position is still uncertain. Mere opportunity, exceptional bitterness in revolt, exceptional gifts for handling emergencies—all appear to have contributed to their rise. But from the first they had no real authority behind them, and from the first they based their rule on naked, destructive terrorism.

Such is the revolution which France at any rate takes tragically and is eager enough to suppress. It is hard to believe that a movement, so tainted by savagery and so primitive in its conceptions that it proposes to substitute for the existing complex organisation of States a rough and ready division into workers and warriors, can constitute a serious menace to the national civilisations of the Western world. It is true that, thanks to the war, it has weapons at its command in exceptional variety and number. It is true that it can bespeak the services of hordes of men whom the war has utterly dislodged from their old environment and left with no aim but the gratification of their savage rapacities and lusts. But a revolution is not made by materials and men, least of all by such materials in the hands of such men. A revolution is the work of an idea. What is the idea which Bolshevism holds up to the shame and extinction of nationalism—an idea comparable to that with which the French Revolution itself pulverised the obsolete feudalism that lay about it? There is no such idea. The appeal of Bolshevism is not to the ideal but to the brutal.

Nevertheless, the Russian revolution is to be treated with the utmost seriousness. If it does not itself inaugurate any new current in human thought, at least it proclaims that some such current must be set flowing. The under-dog has his case,

however hideously he may conduct it. There is, indeed, something repellently harsh in the existing industrial structure of society. The division that it makes of mankind is too arbitrary. On the one side all the delight of constructive work—its risks and responsibilities and rewards. On the other side nothing—not even the certainty of the next meal. We need not be revolutionaries to feel that there is something wrong in the principle which persistently maintains and increases the number of those on the hopeless side of the line.

To this defect, of which enlightened minds have been conscious ever since the consequences of the industrial revolution first became apparent, the Bolshevists have directed instant attention. They have not remedied it, of course—there is not a single constructive notion in their system—but they have at least effectively attacked one of its main causes. They have put an end to the uncomplaining patience with which its consequences were endured. Their propaganda appears likely to give the necessary impulse to some of those sweeping reforms to which the loftiest minds of the former epoch aspired in vain through lack of general sympathy and support. In this aspect Bolshevist propaganda, for all its empty frenzy, is not altogether a bad thing.

The propaganda spreads. It is making headway

among men and women who do not believe a tenth of its promises, who distrust its policies, who shrink with horror from the methods which it advocates. There is no danger in its few rapid converts. The danger is in the thousands whose circumstances move them to wonder, however doubtfully, whether there may not be something in it after all. It would ill become any student of human affairs who claims to view them with that insight that results from setting them in their historical perspective, to urge that the case of these wondering and doubtful thousands should be handled in a temper of harsh repression. Rather should it be approached with the utmost tolerance and sympathy. After all, these people are the outcome of nationalism as we have known it. They are such citizens as their States have made them, and if they are bad citizens it is for the States themselves to repair the defects of their qualities. The more multitudinous the defects the more urgent the work of repair. There is pith yet in the old Aristotelian truism that a system of government falls into jeopardy so soon as it has more enemies than friends. The national system has far more friends than enemies. Nothing has yet impaired its claim to offer under its democratic institutions a life far richer in hope and promise than any yet presented to the choice of average

mankind. But it is responsible for its enemies. They are of its own making, and must, therefore, be won over, not ridden down.

Her own past bids France stand for the national idea, one and indivisible, and in its name she calls us to fight the revolution. Maybe that she pays the revolution too great a compliment. All true revolutions begin by antagonising the world and end by converting it.[1] Only in virtue of this process do they merit their name. It was so with Christianity, with the renaissance, with the great French political movement that was specifically styled The Revolution, until Russia put forward a new claimant to the title. But the claim is disputable. The Soviet Power is a thing of rags and tatters in thought as well as in fact, and its terrorism is creating round about it the desert in which in the end it will itself starve to death. Since capitalism itself, as we now know it, is but the mushroom growth of a century—a mere instant in historic time—and was visibly relaxing its own principles even before they were challenged from Russia, it is at least doubtful whether the Soviet revolution is compounded of such stuff as transforms the world. Maybe that

[1] There is comfort, too, in the thought that, by the time they are victorious, they cease to terrify. The very middle-class folk who used their power to transform the word "respectable" from a complimentary epithet into an indispensable quality, were themselves the revolutionaries and constitution-wreckers of the period after Waterloo.

in her passionate acceptance to the challenge France is a trifle over jealous for her reputation as the sole factory of Europe's political principles.[1]

That the challenge is addressed to all established governments is not a point of great moment. In Europe all such challenges are addressed to governments. This follows from the quality of European thought. In the East thought is speculative. It is concerned with the soul, not with the State, and one government can well persist through any number of its phases. But in the West thought is practical and demands immediate reflection in surrounding institutions, so that States perish when philosophy has grown beyond them. Nations, like the Roman Empire which they succeeded, like the City States which the Roman Empire succeeded, were born of philosophies, and of philosophies they will die. But that Bolshevism may deal the death-stroke seems the hypothesis of panic. One sees its hollow dagger snap when thrust against the strong armour of national pride. The danger then is that the dagger may be driven against nations too busy with their own internecine hatreds to maintain a proper guard. Against this danger the nations can find timely and sufficient protection in their newly-formed League.

[1] The conduct of the United States need not here be taken into account. As has been explained above, acceptance of the challenge was forced upon her by the fact that she is only now becoming a fully formed nation.

And there, in a vague region of doubt and hope and guesswork, remote indeed from the historical facts with which this essay is mainly concerned, we must be content to leave it. Perhaps it is both right and instructive that this survey of European unrest should end as it began, with the contemplation of the eternal paradox of human affairs. In history no question is entirely answered nor entirely abandoned as unanswerable. There is no finality either in victory or in defeat. So soon as dangers threaten the social fabric, weapons are devised wherewith to combat them; and so soon as the fight is won, new dangers appear. After centuries of effort, a series of political discords is resolved into a series of higher harmonies; and forthwith the sharpened ear catches harsher discords in a more exalted scale. This is the music of history, and it is no confused jangle without guiding motive; for behind it all, and informing it all, ever subject to change and yet eternally the same, triumphant in its weakness, drawing equal food of energetic hope from failure and from achievement, there broods, unconquering yet indomitable, the Spirit of Man.

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